

PLANTING OF NEW CHINESE CHURCHES IN THE GREATER BOSTON AREA:
A STUDY OF
THE CHINESE BIBLE CHURCH OF GREATER BOSTON - METROWEST

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DEDICATION

To my loving wife Anna and my lovely daughters Charina & Priscilla,
and to members of the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston (CBCGB)
and CBCGB-Metrowest.

To God be the glory!

And they sang a new song:

“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals,

because you were slain,

and with your blood you purchased men for God

from every tribe and language and people and nation.

You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,

and they will reign on the earth.”

(Revelation 5:9-10)

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ABSTRACT

The Chinese population in the Greater Boston area increased over the years, and many Chinese churches were established according to the needs to reach out to them. However, there are clusters of towns with high Chinese population but without any Chinese church in their vicinity. So, new Chinese churches need to be planted to reach out to them.

The biblical foundation of church planting, and the planting of Chinese (or ethnic) churches are examined. While the phrase “church planting” does not appear in the Bible, the concept and examples of church planting are ubiquitous. Church planting traces its foundation to the Great Commission, and Peter Wagner sums it up well by saying that: “The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.”

The theory and practice of church planting based on the current church planting literatures are reviewed. Based on this finding, a survey was conducted to evaluate the recent planting of the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston – Metrowest. The results were analyzed along with discussions on the lessons learned.

CHAPTER 1

Why Plant New Chinese Churches in the Greater Boston Area?

1.1 Introduction

The thesis for this project is evaluating the need and the plan for the planting of new Chinese churches in the Greater Boston area. The thrust of this project is a description of the process of planting a new Chinese church in the Greater Boston area and the lessons learned from this endeavor. One may immediately raise the question: “Why plant new Chinese churches in the Greater Boston area?” This question may be broken down into three inter-related sub-questions: (1) Why *plant churches*? (2) Why plant *Chinese (or ethnic)* churches? and (3) Why plant Chinese churches *in the Greater Boston area*?

The first question: “Why plant churches?” is a legitimate question, especially in places where there are already many churches. Christian churches are often criticized for being denominationally minded and individualistic. Should Christians not combine churches together so that they present the unity of the body of Christ? Why should there be such a plethora of churches within a block or two from one another? Even more so, a trend of the society is to have supermarkets replace the little “mom-and-pop” stores. Why create new little “mom-and-pop” churches? Why not consolidate them and form super or mega churches?

The second question: “Why plant Chinese (or ethnic) churches?” is also a very valid question to be raised. The Bible says that: “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with

Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26-28). If Christians are all one in Christ Jesus, why should they plant ethnic churches that seem to go back to the road of segregation?

The above two important questions will be addressed later in Chapter Two. The third question: “Why plant Chinese churches in the Greater Boston area?” will be examined first.

1.2 The Chinese Population in the Greater Boston Area

The first Chinese people most likely arrived in Boston during the late eighteenth century. This was prompted by the establishment of direct commerce between China and the United States in 1784.¹ Since Boston is one of the main seaport cities, it was Chinese sailors on board of merchant ships who first set foot in Boston. Their presence at such an early date is evidenced by a tomb of a young sailor who was buried in Boston Common. His epitaph reads: “Here lies Interr’d the body of Chow Mandarin, a native of China, aged 19 years; whose death was occasioned on the 11th, September, 1798, by the fall from the mast of the ship, Mac of Boston. This stone is erected in his memory by his affectionate master John Boit, Jr.”²

The Chinese sailors who came to Boston during that time were of a transient nature. A more permanent residence taken up by Chinese in Massachusetts did not occur until the mid-nineteenth century. In 1847, an American missionary, the Reverend S. R. Brown, brought with him three Chinese boys to the United States to study at the Monson

¹ Zhongxin Wang, *History of Chinese Protestant Church in Boston* (in Chinese), (Taipei: CMI Publishing Co. Ltd., 1997), 1.

² Doris C.J. Chu, *Chinese in Massachusetts: Their Experiences and Contributions* (Boston: Chinese Culture Institute, 1987), 34.

Academy in Massachusetts. One of them was Yung Wing, who later graduated from Yale and became a high ranking official in the Chinese government. Yung Wing successfully persuaded the Emperor to send other students to the United States for specialized training and education.³ Unfortunately, this program was discontinued after a few years because many who came ended up permanently staying in America.

The first substantial group of Chinese moved to western Massachusetts in 1870, and then to Boston a few years later. They were enticed to come to America when the news of the discovery of gold in the San Francisco area reached China in the 1840s.⁴ At that time, the Chinese government had a very repressive policy on emigration. However, due to the lack of resources in the homeland and the need for survival, some Chinese in southern China risked their lives to come to America. Those who came made a small fortune and proceeded to invite others to join them. As more Chinese came to California and job competition got tougher, many slowly migrated eastwards and learned to work in different professions.

A large shoe factory in North Adams, Massachusetts under a three-year contract, hired some of the Chinese from California. When the contract expired, many moved to the Boston area and worked on the construction of the Pearl Street Telephone Exchange. For housing accommodation, they pitched tents at the nearby Ping On Alley (the Alley of Peace and Safety). As more Chinese moved to the Boston area, they extended their settlement to the present Chinatown and South Cove area.⁵

³ B.L. Sung, *Mountain of God* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 21.

⁴ Sung, 10.

⁵ Sung, 47.

By 1875, there were about 39 Chinese in Boston,⁶ most of them having moved up from North Adams, Massachusetts. The Chinese population slowly increased to 200 in 1890, 500 in 1900, and 900 in 1910.⁷ Even though the Chinese population in Boston doubled every decade, numerically, it was still a small number. In fact, the Chinese population in the early twentieth century remained mostly at the same level due to the American Chinese Exclusion Act instituted at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1943, however, the Act was repealed. As a result, the Chinese population in America increased quite substantially during the mid-twentieth century. In Boston, the Chinese population was about 2,000 in early 1950. Its number was more than doubled to 5,400 in early 1960, and almost quadrupled to 7,900 in 1970.⁸

In 1965, the Immigration Act was further relaxed allowing more Chinese to become permanent residents and citizens of America. This rapid Chinese population growth extended beyond the city of Boston and into other cities and towns in Massachusetts. According to the 2000 U.S. Census data, the Chinese population today is over 85,000 in the state of Massachusetts.⁹ With an additional estimated 29,000 Chinese international students¹⁰ and an unknown number of illegal immigrants, the total Chinese population in Massachusetts well exceeds 100,000.

Much like the general population distribution in Massachusetts, there are more Chinese in the eastern part of the state. An estimate of the Chinese population in each

⁶ The City Missionary Society, *Eightieth Annual Report for the Year 1896* (Boston: The City Missionary Society, 1897), 17, cited by Zhongxin Wang, *A History of Chinese Churches in Boston* (Th.D. Dissertation, Boston University, School of Theology, 2000), 20.

⁷ Chu, 56.

⁸ Action for Boston Community Development, Planning and Evaluation Department, *The Chinese in Boston* (Boston: ABCDPED, 1971), 20, cited by Wang 2000, 176.

⁹ The University of Massachusetts Institute for Asian American Studies, *Asian Population in Massachusetts by Ethnicity*. <http://www.iaas.umb.edu/research/census/demographic/maethnic.shtml>, June 1, 2007.

¹⁰ IIE Network, *International Student in the U.S.*, <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/>, June 1, 2007.

city and town within the state can be obtained from the State of Massachusetts websites.¹¹

Every year, the State of Massachusetts provides an estimate of the population of each city and town along with the percentage of major ethnic groups within each. From there, the 2005 Chinese population for each city and town in Massachusetts can be estimated.¹²

Table 1 shows the 24 cities and towns with an estimated Chinese population over 500. Not surprisingly, the city of Boston has the highest Chinese population of close to 18,500 people. This is followed by Quincy on its south with 9,400. The other neighboring towns of Cambridge and Malden also have very high Chinese population of near 5,000. In the suburbs, many Chinese congregate around towns which are known to have good school districts. Consequently, the towns of Newton and Brookline both have Chinese population in the range of 3,000 to 5,000, and the relatively small town of Lexington has close to 1,700 Chinese. As more Chinese moved to the Greater Boston area, however, many could no longer afford the high cost of living in the above mentioned suburbs. As a result, they chose new pockets of towns that offer good education, but are farther away from Boston. Figure 1 is a map of the distribution of Chinese population in the eastern Massachusetts.

¹¹ These data were published one webpage for each city or town. For example, the webpage for the city of Boston is: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Boston-Massachusetts.html>, etc., June 1, 2007.

¹² Unfortunately, ethnic groups with less than 5% of the population within each city or town are not provided.

City or Town	Est. 2005 Pop.	Chinese Percentage	Est. Chinese Pop.
Boston	559034	3.3	18448
Quincy	90250	10.4	9386
Cambridge	100135	4.8	4806
Malden	55871	8.0	4470
Newton	83158	4.8	3992
Brookline	55590	6.1	3391
Somerville	74963	2.4	1799
Lexington	30266	5.6	1695
Randolph	30468	4.9	1493
Waltham	59556	2.5	1489
Worcester	175898	0.7	1231
Framingham	65060	1.8	1171
Amherst	34047	3.4	1158
Wellesley	26978	3.2	863
Medford	53523	1.6	856
Andover	33042	2.5	826
Arlington	41224	2.0	824
Acton	20562	4.0	822
Shrewsbury	33174	2.3	763
Chelmsford	33759	2.0	675
Belmont	23371	2.8	654
Lowell	103111	0.6	619
Brockton	94632	0.6	568
Natick	31943	1.7	543
Braintree	33681	1.6	539
Burlington	23299	2.3	536
Needham	28418	1.8	512
Westford	21461	2.3	494
Watertown	32303	1.5	485
Westborough	18732	2.3	431
Wayland	13002	3.1	403
Winchester	21181	1.9	402
Bedford	12462	3.2	399
North Andover	27155	1.4	380
Marlborough	37444	1.0	374
Woburn	37147	1.0	371
Weston	11581	3.2	371
Milton	26034	1.3	338
North Amherst	6019	5.5	331
Sharon	17207	1.9	327
Sudbury	17066	1.9	324
Canton	21571	1.5	324
Northborough	14675	2.1	308

Table 1: Cities and Towns in Massachusetts with Chinese Population More Than 300

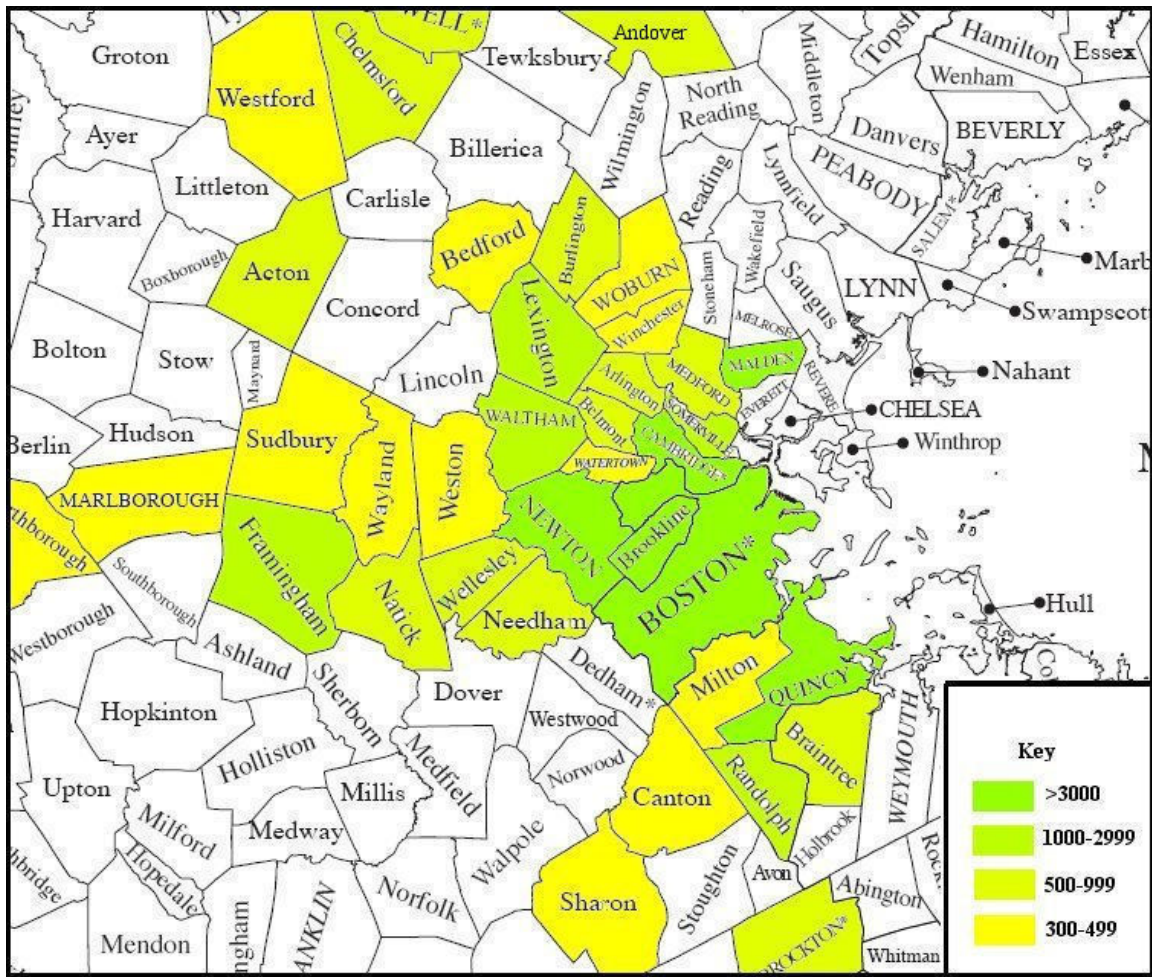


Figure 1: Distribution of Chinese Population in Eastern Massachusetts

1.3 The Chinese Churches in the Greater Boston Area

The gospel was brought to the Chinese in their homeland on four different occasions – each time met with mixed results. The first effort was started by the Nestorian Christians during the Tang dynasty (about A.D. 635). It was extinguished about 200 years later when the Tang Emperor Wuzong eliminated all foreign religions in favor of Taoism. The second attempt was made by the Franciscans during the Yuan dynasty (about A.D. 1290). They were invited to China by Kublai Khan to assist in ruling over the Chinese. When the Mongols were driven out by the Hans (and the Ming

dynasty was established about A.D. 1370), all the Catholic priests were expelled, and Christianity disappeared from China. The gospel came to China a third time when the Jesuits came during the late Ming dynasty (about A.D. 1550). Their efforts ended when the Pope Clement XI decreed that the Chinese folk religion rituals and offerings to the emperor constituted idolatry. This so angered the Ch'ing dynasty Emperor Kangxi that he ordered all the Catholic priests to leave the country in A.D. 1721. The fourth attempt was made by the Protestants led by Robert Morrison during the middle of the Ch'ing dynasty (about A.D. 1800). Their mission ended when the Communists took over China and drove out all foreign missionaries in the early 1950s.¹³

While the efforts to bring Christianity to China before 1950 were met with mixed results, the gospel reached the Chinese during that period in another way. Chinese were known to be explorers of new frontiers. Some went abroad because of curiosity while others left their homeland due to hardship. In both cases, they persevered and often formed small pockets of Chinese communities throughout the world. As they settled in foreign lands, new opportunities for the gospel to reach to them arose. This was what happened in the Greater Boston area.

The first Chinese Christian of record in the Greater Boston area was Oong Ar-showe. He came to South Boston around 1850 and later settled in Malden. He opened a shop selling teas and coffee and became a very successful businessman. He adapted well to the American culture, married his wife Louisa Hentz in 1853, and had a son William who was born in February 1854. In April of that year, both the father and the son were

¹³ While all these efforts seemingly resulted in failure, Christianity did survive in China and is now thriving. See David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing* (Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2003), 19-45.

baptized together at Saint Matthews Church.¹⁴ It is not clear how Oong Ar-showe became a Christian. Nonetheless, it is regarded as a rare incident of successful assimilation of Chinese into the American culture during that time.

A more intentional and systematic effort to bring the gospel to the Chinese in the Boston area began in 1876. As the Chinese population increased, the City Missionary Society decided to start an evening school in the Old Colony Chapel on Tyler Street to help Chinese immigrants to learn English. This evolved into a Sunday School class meeting at the Mount Vernon Church in 1879. This effort resulted in the first Chinese convert – name unknown – in 1881 since Oong Ar-showe. In 1896, there were eight different Sunday Schools with 24 converts. By 1906, there were 44 converts¹⁵ and over 1,000 Sunday School students in 1910.¹⁶ By 1939, there were more than 100 Chinese Christians.¹⁷ Many Boston churches became interested to reaching out to the Chinese in the area. They pooled their resources together to form a Chinese Y.M.C.A. in Chinatown. This Y.M.C.A. became the seed of the first Chinese church in Boston many years later.¹⁸

The vision of the establishment of a Chinese church in Boston began in the early 1900s. Dr. Daniel Waldron, secretary and superintendent of the City Missionary Society, urged the uniting of all the various Chinese Sunday schools into one Chinese church.¹⁹ This dream was finally realized in 1947 when Dr. Peter Shih was recruited from China to

¹⁴ Chu, 34.

¹⁵ Wang 1997, 6-8.

¹⁶ Zhongxin Wang, *A History of Chinese Churches in Boston*. (Th.D. Dissertation, Boston University, School of Theology, 2000), 80.

¹⁷ Wang 1997, 15.

¹⁸ Wang 1997, 88.

¹⁹ Wang 1997, 97.

be the pastor of the first Chinese church in Boston.²⁰ This was named the Chinese Christian Church of New England (CCCNE). The early church members were sixteen high school students, all being members of the Chinese Y.M.C.A.²¹ In 1949, CCCNE began holding its services in the Y.M.C.A. building, and the number of worshipers reached over 300 people during one Christmas service.²² In 1956, CCCNE moved to Harvard Street. Unfortunately, the church building was burnt down in 1968, and the members met in a church daycare center for seven years.²³ Finally, in 1975, CCCNE bought the Dutch Leyden Congregational Church in Brookline where they have been meeting to this day.²⁴ CCCNE started out as a Cantonese-speaking church. After moving to Brookline, however, it attracted more Mandarin-speaking Chinese. Today, the worship services of CCCNE are conducted in Mandarin and English only.

The second Chinese church in the Boston area is the Boston Chinese Evangelical Church (BCEC), also located in Chinatown. BCEC was started by the then assistant pastor of CCCNE in 1961.²⁵ He left CCCNE due to his more evangelical view and started a new worship service with a congregation of eighteen people.²⁶ Their worship services were held in homes and rented buildings for 18 years until the construction of the current church buildings at 249 Harrison Avenue in 1979. BCEC grew to become the largest Chinese church in the area with over 1000 people worshipping on Sundays. They have worship services in Cantonese, English, and more recently, Mandarin as well.

²⁰ Wang 1997, 102.

²¹ Wang 1997, 105.

²² Wang 1997, 107.

²³ Wang 1997, 111.

²⁴ Wang 1997, 113.

²⁵ Wang 1997, 111.

²⁶ Boston Chinese Evangelical Church, *BCEC History*, http://www.bcec.net/aboutus_history.htm, June 1, 2007.

The third Chinese church in the Boston area is the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston (CBCGB). It was started in 1969 by 13 people in a Bible Study group in Cambridge. At the time, more and more Chinese students were coming from Taiwan. They spoke Mandarin but the existing two Chinese churches both used Cantonese in their worship services. As a result, CBCGB was started with Mandarin as the language of worship, and they met in the home of a leader. After many moves, they are now worshipping in their existing building in Lexington in 1991. CBCGB is now the largest Mandarin-speaking church in the Greater Boston area with over 1000 people worshipping on Sundays.

As the Chinese population increased during the 1980s, more Chinese churches were formed to meet this need. There were at least nine Chinese churches added to the Boston area during this time. They included: (1) the Boston Taiwanese Christian Church in 1981 in Brighton;²⁷ (2) the Episcopal Boston Chinese Ministry in 1981 in Boston;²⁸ (3) the Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts in 1982 in Southborough;²⁹ (4) the Chinese Baptist Church of Greater Boston in 1982 now in Quincy;³⁰ (5) the Boston Chinese Alliance Church in 1982 now in Arlington;³¹ (6) the Boston Chinese Church of Saving Grace in 1985 in Chinatown;³² (7) the Chinese Evangelical Church of Metro-Boston, a church planted by the Boston Chinese Evangelical Church which later became the Greater Boston Chinese Alliance Church, in 1985 in Allston;³³ (8) the Wollaston

²⁷ Wang 1997, 68.

²⁸ Wang 1997, 78.

²⁹ Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts, <http://www.cgcm.org>, June 1, 2007.

³⁰ Chinese Baptist Church of Greater Boston, <http://www.cbcbgb.org>, June 1, 2007.

³¹ Boston Chinese Alliance Church, <http://www.chinesealliancechurch.org>, June 1, 2007.

³² Boston Chinese Church of Saving Grace, <http://churchofsavinggrace.ma.us.mennonite.net/>, June 1, 2007.

³³ Wang 2000, 205.

Lutheran Church Chinese Ministry in Quincy;³⁴ and (9) the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell, a church planted by the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston, in 1989 in Chelmsford.³⁵

Many more Chinese churches were added in the 1990s and 2000s. At this time, there are more than twenty Chinese churches in the Greater Boston area. Table 2 is a list of the Chinese churches listed on the September 2006 issue of the New England edition of the Herald Monthly.³⁶ These churches typically conduct their worship services in one or more of these three Chinese dialects: Mandarin (M), Cantonese (C), and Taiwanese (T). Some churches also have their services in English (E) for the second-generation Chinese and non-Chinese in their midst. Figure 2 shows where these churches are located in the eastern Massachusetts area.

By comparing Table 1 with Table 2, (or by examining Figure 2), one can easily notice that most of the Chinese churches are in cities and towns with the Chinese population exceeding 500. Of the 23 churches listed, only two Chinese churches –the ones in Springfield and Southborough – are not located in a city or town with Chinese population over 500. These two seemingly aberrant locations can be understood once the demographics are examined in a little more detail. In the case of Springfield, though the Chinese population is less than 0.5% (thus it is not listed as a distinct ethnic category in the city website), there may still be a substantial Chinese population given that Springfield has over 150,000 people. In the case of Southborough, though the town has few Chinese, it is right next to Framingham which has a high Chinese population of over

³⁴ Wollaston Lutheran Church Chinese Ministry, <http://www.wlchurch.org>, June 1, 2007.

³⁵ Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell, *Our History*, <http://cbcgl-main.org/aboutus.aspx>, June 1, 2007.

³⁶ Chinese Christian Herald Crusades, Inc (*Herald Monthly, New England Edition*. September, 2006). It is likely that there are some newer or smaller Chinese churches not listed in this directory.

1,000. Of the other 21 churches, 13 of them are concentrated in the six cities or towns with Chinese population exceeding 3000. The remaining 8 are scattered in the remaining cities and towns.

Church	City or Town	Language			
		M	C	T	E
Amherst Chinese Christian Church	Amherst	x			
Boston Chinese Alliance Church	Arlington		x		x
Boston Chinese Church of Saving Grace	Boston	x	x		
Boston Chinese Evangelical Church (BCEC)	Boston	x	x		x
BCEC - Newton Campus	Newton		x		x
Episcopal Boston Chinese Ministry (EBCM)	Boston	x	x		
EBCM - Quincy	Quincy		x		
Greater Boston Chinese Alliance Church	Boston		x		
Chinese Christian Church of New England	Brookline	x			x
Emeth Chapel	Burlington	x			
Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell	Chelmsford	x	x		x
Boston Taiwanese Christian Church	Framingham			x	x
Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston	Lexington	x			x
Chinese Christian Church of Grace in Malden	Malden	x	x		
Taiwanese Presbyterian Church of Greater Boston	Needham	x		x	x
Chinese International Baptist Church	Cambridge	x			
Quincy Chinese Church of the Nazarene	Quincy		x		
Wollaston Lutheran Church Chinese Ministry	Quincy		x		
Chinese Baptist Church of Greater Boston	Quincy	x	x		
Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts (CGCM)	Southboro	x	x		x
CGCM - Worcester	Worcester	x			
Evangelical Covenant Church	Springfield	x			
Union Taiwan Presbyterian Church of New England	Newton			x	

Table 2: List of Chinese Churches in Massachusetts by Christian Herald Magazine

1.4 The Need for New Chinese Churches in the Greater Boston Area

The early Chinese immigrants to the United States were mostly Cantonese-speaking. They lived mostly in the large cities and gradually formed Chinatowns in these cities. In the 1960s and 1970s, there were more students coming from Taiwan, and Mandarin slowly became the language of choice in university campuses and suburbs. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was an increasing number of students coming from mainland

China. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, reaching Mandarin-speaking Chinese became a new focus of churches. Today, many Cantonese-speaking churches are extending their ministry by incorporating bilingual worship services in both Cantonese and Mandarin. So, if one considers church planting, one should focus on Mandarin-speaking Chinese. Therefore, the current language designation of the existing churches can be mostly ignored by safely assuming that all Chinese churches will reach out to Mandarin-speaking Chinese.

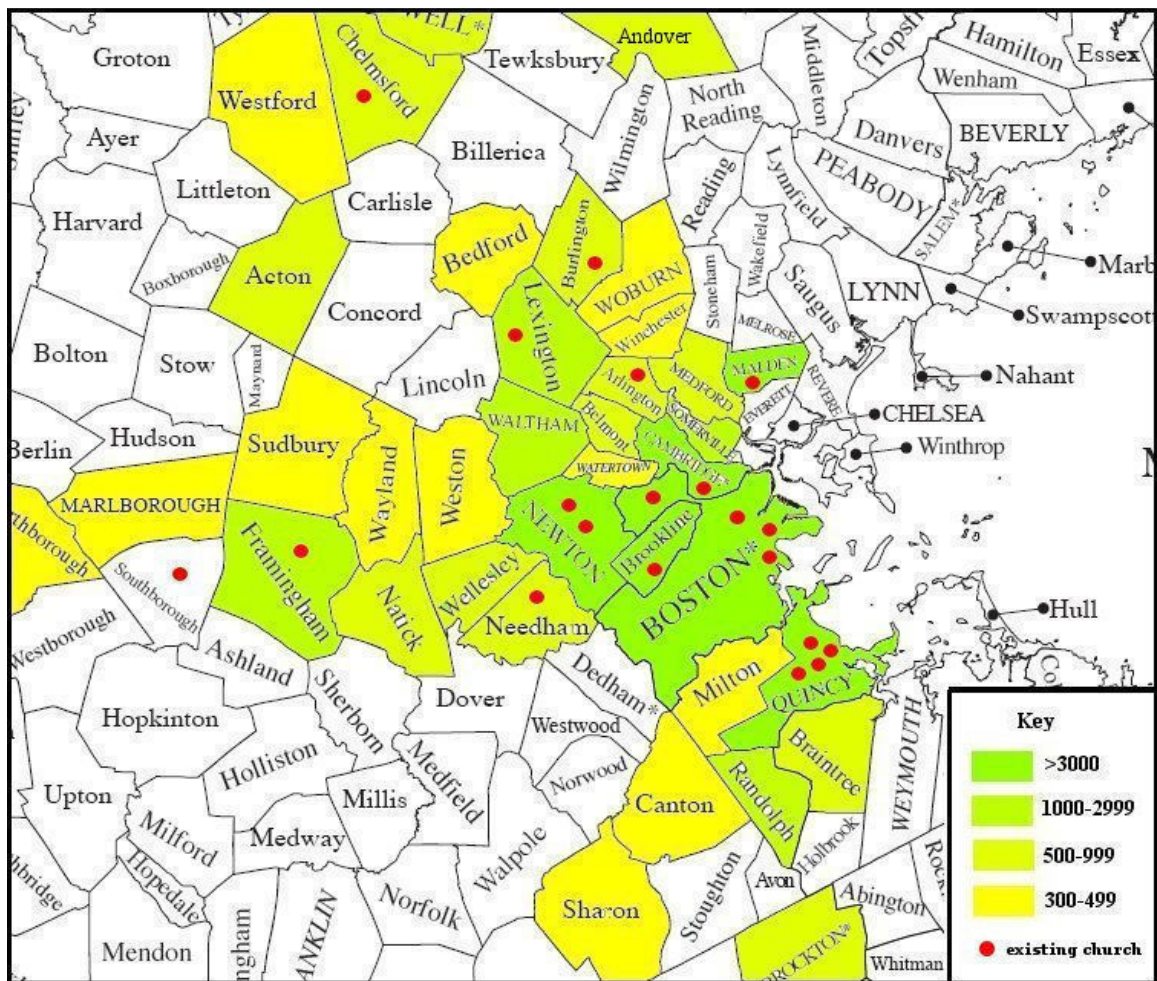


Figure 2: Location of Existing Chinese Churches in Eastern Massachusetts

By examining Figure 2, one can easily identify three areas with a high Chinese population without any existing Chinese churches. These areas are: (1) Andover; (2) Acton; and (3) Sharon. They are marked by diamond symbols as shown in Figure 3. After these three locations in the Greater Boston area with a high Chinese population are identified, the next logical question is “Should one plant new Chinese churches in these areas?” From an evangelism viewpoint, this question can be rephrased as: “Are the current churches, Chinese or otherwise, able to reach out to the Chinese non-Christians in these areas?”

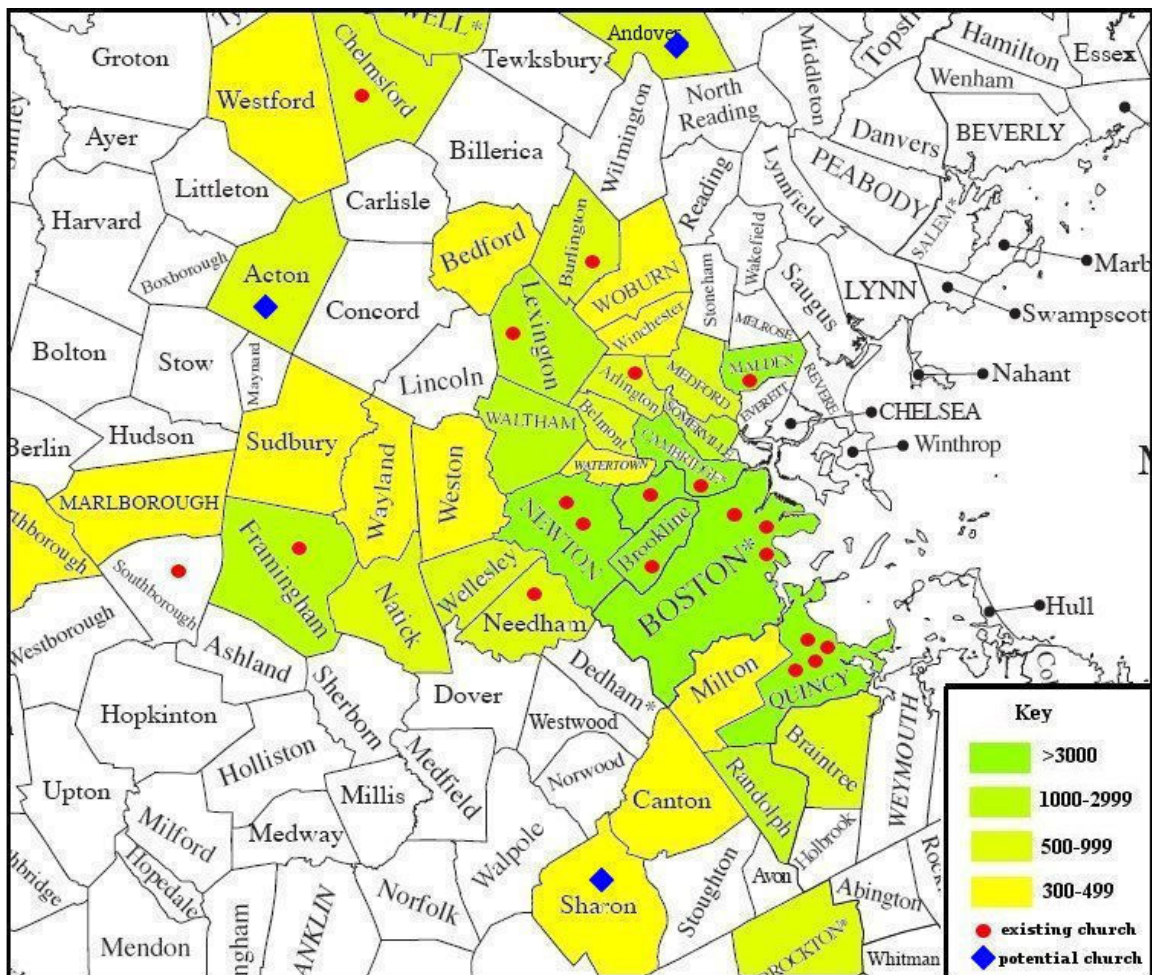


Figure 3: Location of Potential New Chinese Churches in Eastern Massachusetts

While many first-generation Chinese in America, especially the educated ones, have no problem understanding English, they do find it much easier to understand sermons preached in Chinese rather than in English. Furthermore, church life is more than just attending worship services and listening to sermons; many find it easier to fellowship with people of the same language. As for the second-generation Chinese – they are often bi-cultural. Their language of choice is certainly English, but many were brought up in a Chinese or Asian culture at home and can easily identify with other Chinese or Asians of the same background. Therefore, existing American churches can be somewhat successful in reaching out to the second-generation Chinese but much less so to the first-generation Chinese.

In contrast, the existing Chinese churches have a better chance reaching out to first-generation Chinese. However, proximity often presents a barrier – the current Chinese churches are not very accessible to some of the unchurched Chinese population. Therefore, the accessibility to existing Chinese churches will be examined followed by how this will change with the planting of three new Chinese churches in the areas of high Chinese population without any Chinese churches. These towns can easily be identified by looking at Table 3.

A factor that needs to be considered in planting new Mandarin-speaking churches is the dialect of choice for the Chinese living in these towns. Unfortunately, such information is not generally available from most demographic data. However, a simple rule of thumb based on the immigration pattern may be helpful. The first wave of Chinese immigrants was mostly Cantonese-speaking and they tended to settle in the cities of Boston and Quincy. The closer a town is from these two places, the more likely is it

that Cantonese is the dialect of choice for the Chinese in that town. For example, it is quite likely that the majority of Chinese who live in Randolph, which is not far away from Quincy, are Cantonese-speaking.

City or Town	Est. Chinese Pop.	Chinese Churches
Boston	18448	4
Quincy	9386	4
Cambridge	4806	1
Malden	4470	1
Newton	3992	2
Brookline	3391	1
Somerville	1799	
Lexington	1695	1
Randolph	1493	
Waltham	1489	
Worcester	1231	1
Framingham	1171	1
Amherst	1158	1
Wellesley	863	
Medford	856	
Andover	826	
Arlington	824	1
Acton	822	
Shrewsbury	763	
Chelmsford	675	1
Belmont	654	
Lowell	619	
Brockton	568	
Natick	543	
Braintree	539	
Burlington	536	1
Needham	512	1

Table 3: Chinese Churches in Cities and Towns with High Chinese Population

Chinese-speaking people living in towns without any Chinese churches may attend Chinese churches in neighboring towns, provided that they are not too far away. In order to estimate the accessibility of Chinese churches to these towns, the distance and

travel time from the town center to the nearest Chinese church were derived based on the Google map information between the city or town center and the exact address of the churches. The results are shown in Table 4, with the key for the abbreviations of the nearest Chinese churches are shown in Table 5.

City or Town	Est. Chinese Pop.	Nearest Chinese Church	Accessibility	
			Miles	Minutes
Newton	3992	TPCGB	5.2	12
Somerville	1799	BCEC	4.1	9
Randolph	1493	CBCOGB	8.2	16
Waltham	1489	CBCGB	4.2	8
Framingham	1171	CGCM	5.7	10
Wellesley	863	TPCGB	2.5	6
Medford	856	CCCGM	2.5	5
Andover	826	CBCGL	18.5	22
Arlington	824	CBCGB	5.9	9
Acton	822	CBCGB	11.4	19
Shrewsbury	763	CGCM-W	6.2	10
Belmont	654	CBCGB	5.2	10
Lowell	619	CBCGL	8	11
Brockton	568	CBCOGB	15.4	23
Natick	543	TPCGB	5.7	12
Braintree	539	CBCOGB	2.5	5
Westford	494	CBCGL	1.5	2
Watertown	485	CBCGB	6	13
Westborough	431	CGCM	6.6	11
Wayland	403	CBCGB	9	16
Winchester	402	CBCGB	7.4	15
Bedford	399	CBCGB	6.9	11
North Andover	380	CBCGL	18.7	20
Marlborough	374	CGCM	4.8	11
Woburn	371	EC	2.8	6
Weston	371	CBCGB	5.9	10
Milton	338	CBCOGB	4	11
North Amherst	331	ACCC	5.2	11
Sharon	327	CBCOGB	16.4	25
Sudbury	324	CGCM	10.5	20
Canton	324	CBCOGB	11.5	21
Northborough	308	CGCM-W	10.9	15

Table 4: High Chinese Population Cities and Towns without Chinese Churches

It is not clear whether distance or traveling time is a better indicator of accessibility to the nearest Chinese churches. Perhaps a model containing both factors will be the best. However, given that most people usually talk about traveling time rather than distance, it is reasonable to just use traveling time as the main indicator. From casual observation and conversation, it appears that a driving time of over 15-20 minutes forms a barrier for non-Christians to attend church. Based on Table 4 and using a driving time of over 15 minutes as the criteria, nine towns can be identified as lacking easy access to any Chinese churches. These areas need to be evangelized, and they are potential locations for future church planting.

Abbreviation	Church Name
ACCC	Amherst Chinese Christian Church
BCEC	Boston Chinese Evangelical Church
CBCGB	Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston
CBCGL	Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell
CBCOGB	Chinese Baptist Church of Greater Boston
CCCGM	Chinese Christian Church of Grace in Malden
CGCM	Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts
CGCM-W	Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts - Worcester
EC	Emeth Chapel
TPCGB	Taiwanese Presbyterian Church of Greater Boston

Table 5: Key for the Abbreviations of the Chinese Churches

Of these nine cities and towns, there are four clusters of towns with high Chinese populations centering on (1) Randolph; (2) Andover; (3) Acton; and (4) Sharon. If a church is planted in these towns, the traveling time to the new nearest churches is reduced to no more than 17 minutes. Table 6 shows the locations of potential new church plants and the re-calculation of traveling time for these nine towns to the nearest Chinese church. It should be noted that the accessibility to Chinese churches for the Town of

Wayland is not affected by the planting of four potential churches. Of these four clusters of towns with high Chinese concentration, the Randolph cluster is very close to the Boston-Quincy area. As it turns out, the majority of the Chinese there are Cantonese-speaking. To plant new Mandarin churches, the other three clusters of towns around Andover, Acton, and Sharon will be further examined.

Town	Est. Chinese Population	Nearest Chinese Church	Old Accessibility (Minutes)	Revised Accessibility (Minutes)
Randolph	1493	New church plant	16	0
Andover	826	New church plant	22	0
Acton	822	New church plant	19	0
Brockton	568	Randolph church	23	15
Wayland	403	CBCGB	16	16
North Andover	380	Andover church	20	7
Sharon	327	New church plant	25	0
Sudbury	324	Acton church	20	17
Canton	324	Sharon church	21	12

Table 6: Potential Locations for New Church Plants and the Revised Accessibility

First, the Chinese population in the Andover cluster is examined based on the State of Massachusetts population data as shown in Figure 4. In this figure, the two towns with the highest Chinese population in this area are Andover and North Andover with 826 and 380 people respectively. This combined population of over 1,200 people should be large enough to form a new Chinese church.³⁷ By adding the four other towns

³⁷ Lyle Schaller reported that in America, the ratio of one church for every 600 residents has been maintained for 13 decades start in 1860. See Lyle Schaller, *Forty-four Questions for Church Planters* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 15.

in the vicinity – Reading, Wilmington, North Reading, and Lynnfield, there are over 1,700 people in this cluster of towns around Andover. Table 7 shows all six neighboring towns within the Andover cluster and their estimated Chinese population.



Figure 4: Chinese Population in the Andover Cluster

Town	Est. 2005 Pop.	Chinese Percentage	Est. Chinese Pop.
Andover	33042	2.5	826
North Andover	27155	1.4	380
Reading	23164	0.9	208
Wilmington	21472	0.7	150
North Reading	13949	0.6	84
Lynnfield	11546	0.7	81
Total			1729

Table 7: Chinese Population of Six Towns Around Andover

Next, the Chinese population in the Acton cluster is examined. As shown in Figure 5, the town with the highest Chinese population in this area is Acton with 822 people. The town with the next highest Chinese population is Westford with 494 people. However, Westford is right next to Chelmsford where the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell is located. Therefore, Westford can only be marginally considered as a target town. Similarly, the towns of Sudbury with 342 people and the town of Concord with 252 people are closer to the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston in Lexington. Thus, it can be concluded that the potential Acton church plant should be westward looking.

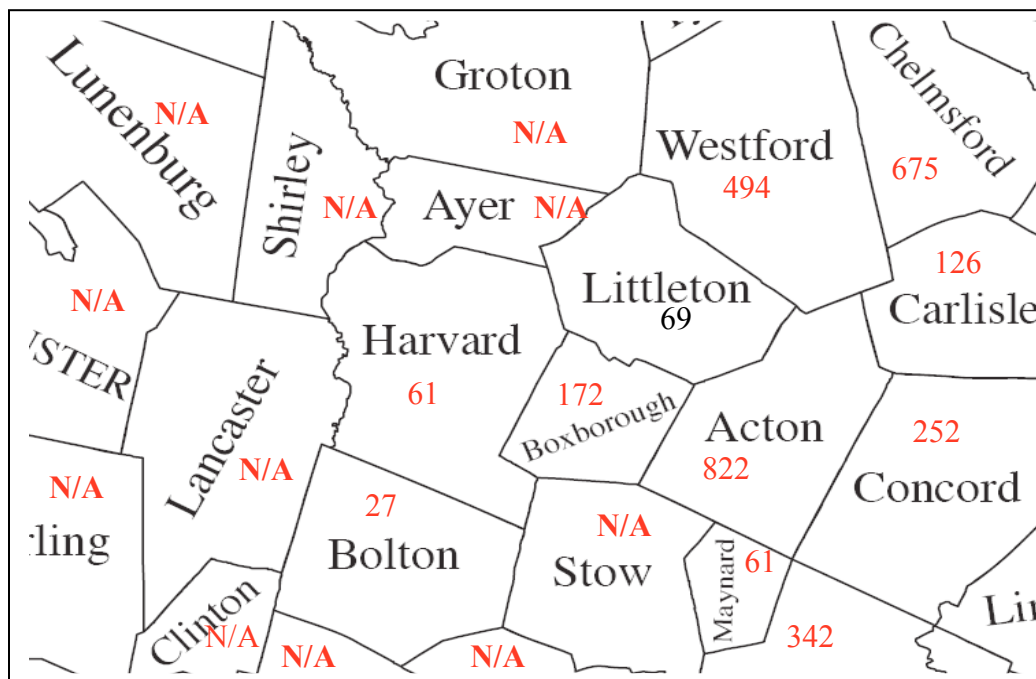


Figure 5: Chinese Population in the Acton Cluster

Once again, six neighboring towns will be used as the initial targets of a new church. By adding the Chinese population of all six towns, it is estimated that the Chinese population of a potential Acton church plant is a little over 1,200 people. Table 8 shows the six neighboring towns and their estimated Chinese population.

Town	Est. 2005 Pop.	Chinese Percentage	Est. Chinese Pop.
Acton	20562	4.0	822
Boxborough	5062	3.4	172
Littleton	8589	0.8	69
Harvard	6074	1.0	61
Maynard	10230	0.6	61
Bolton	4435	0.6	27
Total			1212

Table 8: Chinese Population of Six Towns Around Acton

Finally, the Chinese population in the Sharon cluster is examined based on the State of Massachusetts population data shown in Figure 6. From Figure 6, it appears that there is no one town with a very high Chinese population like Andover or Acton. However, the Chinese population of the six-town cluster is over 1,300 which is more than the Acton cluster. Table 9 shows the six neighboring towns and the estimated Chinese population in these towns.

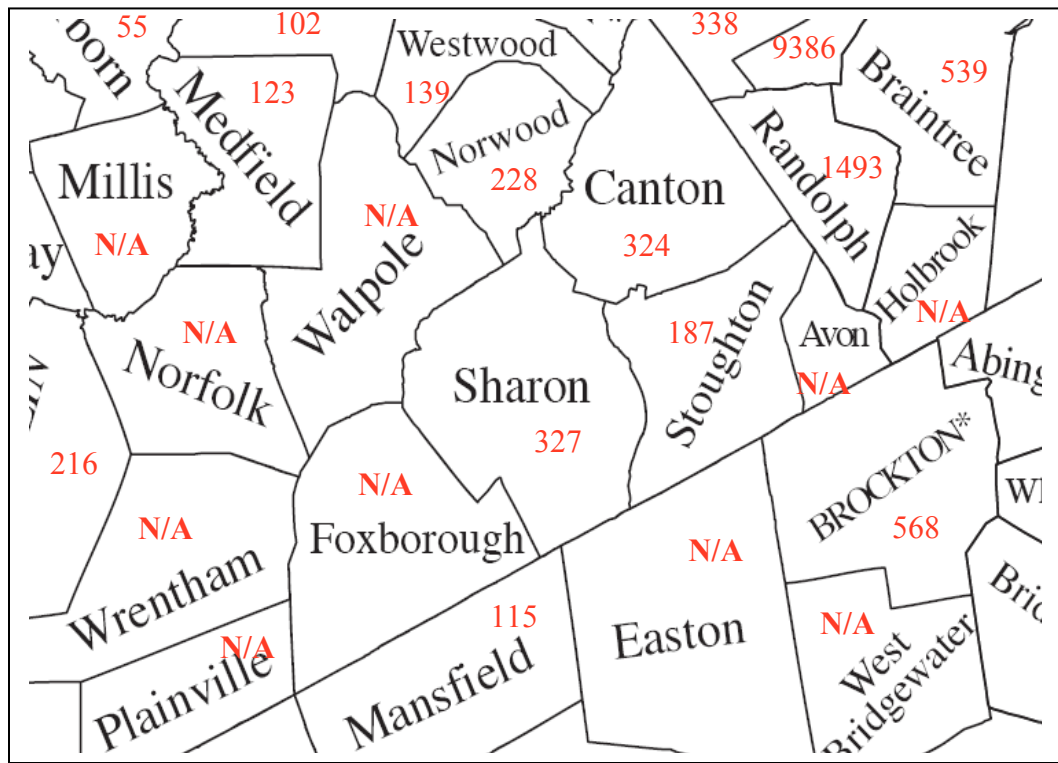


Figure 6: Chinese Population in the Sharon Cluster

Town	Est. 2005 Pop.	Chinese Percentage	Est. Chinese Pop.
Sharon	17207	1.9	327
Canton	21571	1.5	324
Norwood	28478	0.8	228
Stoughton	26692	0.7	187
Westwood	13900	1.0	139
Mansfield	22977	0.5	115
Total			1320

Table 9: Chinese Population of Six Towns around Sharon

1.5 Planting a New Chinese Church in the Metrowest Area of Greater Boston

Given the three town clusters that are potential areas of planting Chinese churches, a priority needs to be established. If a Chinese church is to be planted from without – as many Chinese churches in the Greater Boston area were thus started – any one of the three town clusters will be a good choice. However, a new church plant has a better chance of succeeding if it is started by an existing church that provides the seeding resources. Being the largest Mandarin-speaking church in the Greater Boston area with over 1,000 people in its weekly attendance, the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston (CBCGB) is in the most strategic position to take the lead in planting new Mandarin-speaking churches.

The Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston (CBCGB) was started in 1969. Its mission was to reach out to Mandarin-speaking Chinese living in the suburbs of the Greater Boston area. Due to its convenient location at the intersection of Route 95 and Route 2, as well as its large church facility and resources, it has drawn a lot of people to the church. As the church grew, more people attended the church from places farther away. Therefore in 1989, CBCGB planted her first daughter church, the Chinese Bible

Church of Greater Lowell, in the north. It has now grown to over 400 adults and youth as well as 100 children.³⁸

In 1999, there were already discussions at CBCGB of planting another church in the south. Unfortunately, that plan never took off as it experienced a major setback in 2002 resulting in about 100 people leaving the church.³⁹ Two years later, however, CBCGB was stabilized and has now resumed its mission to plant Mandarin-speaking churches in the needed areas.

In 2005, a demographic study was conducted grouping the CBCGB Chinese congregation by hometown into five geographic areas – the central region near Lexington and the four peripheral regions: east, west, north, and south. It was found that about two-thirds of the Chinese congregation lives in the central region, and the remaining one-third in the peripheral regions. Table 10 shows the demographic distribution of the Chinese congregation in these regions.

Region	Number of Households	Percentage
Central	418	66
West	88	14
North	48	8
East	43	7
South	41	6

Table 10: Demographic Distribution of the Chinese Congregation in CBCGB in 2005

It should be noted that the number of households in Table 10 is substantially higher than the average Sunday attendance of the Chinese congregation at CBCGB at that time. The main reasons are: (1) some people may have left the church

³⁸ Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell, *Our History*, <http://cbcgl-main.org/aboutus.aspx>, June 1, 2007.

³⁹ Even though this church split was caused by human weaknesses and failure, God nevertheless brought out something good from this incident – as a result, a new church was established in the Burlington area.

but their names are still on record; (2) some, especially non-Christians, only come to the regional fellowship group (small group) gathering during weekdays but not on Sundays; (3) in general, the farther away people live from the church, the less their involvement in the church and commitment to the church. They may go regularly to the local fellowship groups but irregularly to the Sunday worship service. Nonetheless, Table 10 provides a general picture of the sphere of influence of the church, and shows where the needs and potential church planting locations are.

The western region is clustered around the town of Acton. Of the 88 households, 44 of them (50%) live in Acton, and 22 of them (25%) in the town of Boxborough which is just west of Acton. The northern region is grouped around Andover. Of the 48 households, 29 (60%) live in Andover, and 12 (25%) live in North Andover. The eastern region is centered on Malden. Of the 43 households in the east region, 18 (42%) live in Malden where there is already a Chinese church. The southern region is more scattered. Of the 41 households, 5 (12%) live in Bridgewater, 4 (10%) in Canton, 4 (10%) in Norwood, and 4 (10%) in Sharon. Of the above four peripheral regions of CBCGB, three of them are without any Chinese churches and coincide well with the potential locations for planting Mandarin-speaking Chinese churches.

Based on CBCGB's spheres of influence in the three peripheral regions, it appears that the western region is the obvious choice of church planting by CBCGB. There are 14% of the congregation who live in the west region centered on Acton. This is almost twice as large as any of the other three regions. As a result, CBCGB started a church plant in the Acton cluster in 2006. This church was named the CBCGB-Metrowest church. The planning that took place leading to the founding of the CBCGB-Metrowest

church along with the key events during the first fifteen months of existence will be discussed in Chapter Four. First, however, the other two questions raised at the beginning of this chapter need to be addressed: (1) Why plant churches? and (2) Why plant Chinese (or ethnic) churches?

CHAPTER 2

Motivation for Planting Churches

2.1 Sanction to Establish the Church

“Why plant churches?” This is a legitimate question, especially in places where there are already many churches. Christians are often criticized for being too denominationally minded and individualistic: “Should Christians not combine churches together so that they present the unity of the body of Christ? Why should there be such a plethora of churches within a block or two from one another?” In addition, a trend of contemporary society is to have supermarkets replace the little “mom-and-pop” stores. Why create new little “mom-and-pop” churches? Why not consolidate them and form super or mega churches?

The best place to begin addressing these questions is to go back to the Bible. Even though the terminology of “church planting” does not appear in the Scriptures, the principle idea and act of church planting is ubiquitous throughout the New Testament. Much insight can be gained by studying the word “church” in the New Testament. The first occurrence of this is found in Matthew 16:13-20, where Peter made the great confession about Jesus: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16). In response, Jesus said: “And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:18-19).

A few important points should be noted in this passage. First, the Greek word for

“church” is **ἐκκλησία**. It is used in the Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Old Testament—for the Hebrew word **עֵדָוָה**. The basic meaning of both **ἐκκλησία** and **עֵדָוָה** is “assembly.” It is a familiar usage for the congregation of Israel found in the Old Testament. Examples of such usages can be found in Deuteronomy 18:16; 23:2, and Psalms 22:25. The primary reference is to people. Moreover, the Greek word **ἐκκλησία** is composed of **εκ** meaning “out of” and **καλεω** meaning “call.” So, the word “church” refers primarily to the people who are “called out of [the world]” rather than a building as it is often understood in English or in Chinese.

Second, God’s people (as represented by Peter in this passage) are to be Jesus’ instrument for building his church: “on this rock I will build my church.” While some have argued that the church is built upon Peter as an individual, most evangelical scholars maintain that Peter is a representative of those making the same confession of faith throughout the ages.⁴⁰ A. T. Robertson sums this up well in saying: “What is the rock on which Christ will build his vast temple? Not on Peter alone or mainly or primarily. Peter by his confession was furnished with the illustration for the rock on which His church will rest. It is the same kind of faith that Peter has just confessed.”⁴¹ So, the church is the universal church consisting of all people who confess that Jesus is the Christ throughout the ages.

Third, it was Jesus Himself who sanctioned the establishment of the church: “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” While the church consists of God’s people and thus could be loosely understood as “belonging” to them, her primary ownership is Jesus Christ. It is because of this ownership that no other

⁴⁰ Robert H. Mounce, *Matthew . New International Bible Commentary, vol. 1* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 162.

⁴¹ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1930), 132.

power or authority can overcome it. The implication is that the church is not simply a human social institution of the gathering of God's people. Rather, it is God's spiritual institution for the advancement of his kingdom. Consequently, the perpetuity of this church is guaranteed.⁴²

Finally, Jesus has given his authority to the church: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." Depending on the interpretation of the tense of the verb "bound" (**δεδεμενον**) as "will be bound"⁴³ or "shall have been bound"⁴⁴ (and likewise for the verb "loose" **λελυμενον**), the action of the church on earth will be echoed or shall be a reflection of that in heaven. This gives the church an immense amount of authority and with it, enormous responsibility. The granting of this authority is repeated in Matthew 18.

Matthew 18:15-18 is the second and only other occurrence of the word "church" in the gospels. Here Jesus talked about what should happen if a brother or sister sins against another person. The person is to talk to the brother in private. If that does not work, then bring one or two others. If that still does not work, then: "tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 18:17-18)

While it is generally agreed that the church in Matthew 16 refers to the universal church, most Bible scholars agree that the church in Matthew 18 instead refers to a local church—a particular body of believers. This is seen through the phrase "tell it to the

⁴² Robertson, 132.

⁴³ For example, see the New International Version translation of the Bible.

⁴⁴ For example, see the New American Standard Bible translation of the Bible.

church” and “listen even to the church.” It is to approach the offender with increasing number of people: one, then two to three, and finally to the whole church in order to win the person back. Thus understood, Jesus has sanctioned the establishment of the universal church as well as local churches, and local churches are the substantiation of the universal church. Moreover, Jesus affirmed the authority given to local churches as parallel to the universal church. Therefore, the establishment or planting of local churches as part was stipulated by the Lord Jesus Christ.

2.2 Commission to Plant Churches

Though the word “church” is not again mentioned in the Gospels, Jesus’ commissioning of the disciples to tell the good news of salvation can be understood as the commission to build the universal church and local churches. Those who embrace the good news are to repent of their sins and accept Jesus as their Lord. In so doing, their lives are transformed, and they become part of God’s church. This is made clear in 1 Peter 2:4-5: “As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” In Peter’s metaphors, believers are the “living stones,” and the “spiritual house” is the church. In other words, people are saved, and they are to become a part of the church of God. So, the commission to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ has as its end product to build up the Church. Therefore these commissioning passages are of prime importance

regarding church planting. These passages in Matthew, Luke, John, and Acts will be discussed according to the chronological order of the events' occurrence.⁴⁵

2.2.1 Commission in Gospel of John

The first commissioning passage is John 20:21 which occurred in Jerusalem on the evening of Jesus' resurrection: "Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'" John's account of the commissioning is the simplest, but it conveys a very important message: the way the disciples are sent out is to be modeled after the way Jesus was sent out. To appreciate the full implication of this commission, the where, why, and how Jesus was sent will be examined.

First, where (or to whom) was Jesus sent? When John the Baptist was imprisoned, he sent his disciples to find out if Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor" (Matthew 11:4-5). Furthermore, Jesus said, "See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. The Son of Man came to save what was lost" (Matthew 18:10-11). In other words, Jesus was sent to the weak, the poor, the neglected, and the lost. So, one should think about where to plant churches, paying particular attention to the needy people—both physically and spiritually—in the community.

Second, why was Jesus sent? The Scripture provides two complementary answers to this question. Jesus said: "For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to

⁴⁵ The Gospel of Mark also contains a commissioning passage on Mark 16:15-16. However, it will not be discussed here since the most reliable early manuscripts and other ancient witnesses do not have Mark 16:9-20.

do the will of him who sent me” (John 6:38). The primary reason why Jesus came was to do God’s will. That also should be the primary reason for planting churches. Everything else comes after this objective. If Christians are not mindful, they may consciously or subconsciously build a church as an empire that glorifies people rather than God. The secondary reason why Jesus came was for the people to whom He was sent. He said: “I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness” (John 12:46). Furthermore, He said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). The Gospel of Matthew also noted Jesus’ three-fold ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing (Matthew 9:35). Therefore, Jesus came to bring whole-person salvation and full meaning to people’s lives. So, when Christians reach out to people through church planting, they must minister to their physical and emotional needs along with their spiritual needs. It is sad to observe that many churches which are to be the light of the world make no impact in the community they are in.

Third, how was Jesus sent? Jesus said: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). Thus, Jesus came as a servant, coming willingly and sacrificially. Paul further exhorted the believers to imitate Jesus: “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:6-8). Thus, Christians are to serve with a servant attitude of humility and in a sacrificial way as they minister to people through church planting.

2.2.2 Commission in Gospel of Matthew

The second commissioning passage is Matthew 28:18-20 which says that Jesus came to his disciples and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew’s account of the commissioning is the most comprehensive among the four passages—so much so that it is generally called the Great Commission. It consists of three parts: the premise, the commission proper, and the promise.

The premise of the Great Commission is that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Jesus. As believers are commanded to be Jesus’ ambassadors to reconcile the world to God through Him (2 Corinthians 5:20), they carry the same authority of the master who sends them. Here Jesus informed the disciples that the master has all authority in heaven and on earth. In addition, Jesus promised that He would be with them always to the very end of the age. They could just go and carry out their commission being well assured that they were supported fully by the infinite authority of their master. In like manner, when one plants a church, one will certainly encounter difficulties and setbacks. It helps to remember that church planting is empowered with the full authority of the Lord—the difficulties can be overcome and the setbacks are transitory. The ultimate victory is guaranteed.

In the commission proper, the disciples were asked to carry out four actions as indicated by four verbs. The main verb is “make disciples,” and it is supported by three participles: “going,” “baptizing,” and “teaching.” “Make disciples” implies obedience

and submission to a person. In this case, the person is Jesus Christ. Thus, to “make disciples” is to transform people from following their own instinct to pursuing after the heart of Jesus Christ. It is a metamorphosis from a self-centered life to a Christ-centered life and being integrated into a community of disciples established by the One submitted to.

The three participles are subordinate to and explain the process to “make disciples.” The first participle “going” describes how to get connected with the people Christians try to reach to make them disciples. There are basically two methods of making connections: one is speaker-centered and the other is listener-centered. The speaker-centered method can be called the “come-and-see” strategy. After Philip met Jesus, he told Nathaniel about Christ but Nathaniel was skeptical. So Philip asked him to “come and see” (John 1:46), and took him to meet Jesus. The listener-centered method can be called the “go-and-tell” strategy. Instead of asking them to come, the speaker goes to them. Inviting people to come to existing churches can be viewed as “come-and-see” evangelism. Going to the people to tell them the good news—and planting a church in their midst if needed—can be viewed as the “go-and-tell” evangelism. The participle “going” highlights the importance of the “go-and-tell” strategy in the Great Commission.

The second participle in the Great Commission is “baptizing.” In evangelism, the purpose is to help people understand the gospel message (cognition); feel the need for and get excited about the gospel message (affection); and most of all, make the decision to accept and commit to the gospel message (volition). For some people, including many Chinese in my experience, it is easier for them to verbally confess that they believe in Jesus Christ than to make a public declaration of their faith through baptism. For them,

baptism seems to mark a point of no return for the expected loyalty to the Triune God (“in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”). Indeed, baptism is the public declaration of repentance and devotion to a new master (see Luke 3:1-20). It is the key step of making disciples: an initiation for them to become part of the church, the body of Christ. Except under very special circumstances, most people who claim to be “Christians” and yet refuse to be baptized are not fully committed to the body of Christ. Therefore, the number of baptism is often a good measure of the fruit and effectiveness of planting new churches.

The third participle in the Great Commission is “teaching.” It refers to the continual nurturing process of helping new believers to mature in the body of Christ. At times, baptism is being celebrated as a graduation of sort. Undoubtedly, it is an important milestone of their spiritual journey as they give up their old self. It also marks the successful completion of the catechism class. However, it is more appropriate to consider baptism as the commencement of the new life in Christ. Teaching them to obey everything Jesus has commanded is the process of putting on the new self. This is the heart of discipleship. Evangelism cannot be considered successful unless the new believers go through this “teaching” process which usually takes place in the context of a community, namely, a church.

The connection (“going”), initiation (“baptizing”), and continuation (“teaching”) are the key components to “make disciples.” This whole process includes helping new believers to fully engage in the body life of a local church. If one is not careful, evangelism may be inadvertently reduced to just asking people to say a simple prayer to accept Jesus Christ. Peter Wagner warns about this pitfall:

Evangelizing people by persuading them to go through the ‘Four Spiritual Laws’ or come forward in large crusade is excellent. But if these people who so express their desire to follow Jesus are not subsequently folded into a local congregation, their decision may turn out to be nothing more than a gesture. They never become disciples of Jesus Christ.⁴⁶

Finally, Christians are commanded to make disciples “of all nations.” Although this is a simple and short prepositional phrase, the implication behind it is enormous. A similar phrase occurs in the Luke passage, and it is somewhat implied in the Acts passage as well. There are also many other scriptures—throughout the Old Testament and New Testament—that talk about the good news is for “all nations.” The primary meaning of “all nations” refers primarily to ethno-cultural units rather than geographical or political entities. Thus, the discussion will be deferred until Section 2.4 where the significance of “all nations” to church planting will be examined.

2.2.3 Commission in Gospel of Luke

The third commissioning passage is Luke 24:46-48 which occurred in Jerusalem shortly before Jesus’ ascension: “He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.’” Luke’s account of the commissioning addresses the content of the gospel message as prophesied in the Old Testament. The first half of the prophecy had just been fulfilled before the eyes of the disciples, and the second half of the prophecy was to be fulfilled by the disciples as they took part in the commission.

There are two important facts stated in the first half of the prophecy. It is fashioned like a bad news / good news presentation. The bad news is: “The Christ will

⁴⁶ C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 12.

suffer.” Jesus probably alluded to Isaiah 53 about the Suffering Servant. Suffering is undesirable, but it is the key to glory. The apostle Peter made the following observation about the suffering of Christ: “Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who ... trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow” (1 Peter 1:10-11). Peter then exhorted the believers to endure suffering: “But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:20-21). While suffering is always hard to endure at the time, it sows the seed for the subsequent good news. In the case of Christ, the good news is: “He will rise from the dead.” Christ has suffered, but through it He has overcome death. As Christians plant churches and witness for God, it is important that they do not sugarcoat the gospel message and present only the apparently good attractions. Otherwise, when people go through hardship, they may feel cheated and falter.

The second half of the prophecy in Luke 24:46-48 also contains two important facts fashioned like a bad news / good news presentation. The bad news is the call to “repentance.” Repentance is hard because one has to: (1) recognize his/her sins, (2) admit them; and (3) take the proper corrective action. The good news is that the “forgiveness of sins” is promised. There is no true forgiveness unless there is true repentance. Furthermore, without true forgiveness, there is no true love for the Lord: “Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little” (Luke 7:47). Unlike the first half of the prophecy in Luke 24:46-48 which was fulfilled as Jesus spoke, the second half of the

prophecy was to be fulfilled by the disciples and will continue to be fulfilled by the Christians now. The fulfillment is done through the proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and planting churches. This includes confronting the people with the difficult reality of sin and repentance, so that they will experience true forgiveness and develop genuine love for the Lord.

Luke's account of the commissioning concludes with: "You are witnesses of these things." It carries two important ideas in the commissioning. First, the people who spread the good news of Jesus Christ need to have first hand experience of the good news. Otherwise, they do not qualified to be witnesses. By extension, Christians need to be fully convicted of the gospel message before they plant churches. Second, witnesses are obligated to tell what they see. Since all Christians have experienced the good news, they are obligated to tell it to others.

To complete the discussion of Luke's account of the commission, it should be noted that there are two prepositional phrases and one participial phrase. The first prepositional phrase is "in his name." This phrase is similar to Matthew's except it is a shorter version here. It may be said that Jesus' name here is a representative of the name of the Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The second prepositional phrase is "to all nations." As mentioned in the study of Matthew's account, this will be addressed in full in a later section. The participle phrase is "beginning at Jerusalem." The phrase talks about the geographical beginning of the witnessing. As it turned out, Jerusalem was also the location of the very first church. This phrase is expanded in the Acts' account which will be discussed next.

2.2.4 Commission in Acts

The fourth and final commissioning passage is Acts 1:8 which took place on Mount Olive just prior to Jesus' ascension: "He said to them: 'But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'" Acts' account of the commissioning stresses the empowerment through the Holy Spirit, and the geographical aspect first pointed out in Luke's account.

The promise of empowerment was first announced in Jesus' sanction to build His church in Matthew 16 and 18. Here in Acts, however, this promise was made more explicit that it will be through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each of Jesus' disciples. This power of the Holy Spirit can be seen most vividly in the transformation of the apostle Peter. When Jesus was arrested, Peter followed on at a distance but denied Jesus thrice when he was recognized (Mark 14:54; 66-72). After the Holy Spirit descended upon him, however, he boldly proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ (Acts 2 and 3). He was subsequently arrested, and his defense before the Sanhedrin fully demonstrated his transformation: "Annas the high priest ... and ... Caiaphas ... had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them.... Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them.... When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished" (Acts 4:6-13). As Christians witness for Christ and plant churches, they need to be cognizant of the fact that the Holy Spirit is with them. He will give them boldness and empower them to accomplish things beyond their imagination.

The other important aspect of Acts' account of the commission is that "you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." The disciple's witnessing was to start from their home base of Jerusalem. Then, it was to spread to the surrounding areas of Judea and Samaria. The ultimate goal was to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. This is basically the progression of the gospel as recorded in Acts. It was first in Jerusalem (Acts 1-7), then to Judea and Samaria (Acts 8-12), and then to Asia Minor, to Greece, and finally to Rome—the ends of the earth as was known then (Acts 13-28). In like manner, Christians are to extend their witnessing from their home base to the regions beyond. This extension to the other regions can be done by planting new churches in these places—and this is exactly what the disciples did as recorded in Acts.

2.3 Planting of the First Churches

In the Book of Acts, it can be seen that the disciples carried out Jesus' commission to them in precisely the way Jesus prescribed—churches were planted in Jerusalem and then in places beyond. The trigger event prior to all these church planting activities was the outpouring of the Holy Spirit: "Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:2-4). Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter addressed the crowd. As a result, three thousand people believed (Acts 2:14-41). Consequently, these people gathered together and "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42).

Although the word “church” was not used here,⁴⁷ they clearly formed the first church as implied by Acts 5:11 that says: “Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.”

The first church was likely divided up into many smaller units for worship and fellowship. David Shenk and Ervin Stutzman suggest a one-church-many-congregation arrangement. The first congregations were house churches which met in small clusters throughout the Jerusalem metropolitan area. Since most of the homes in the Jerusalem area were small, it may be assumed that about ten to twenty people gathered in each of these cell group fellowships. Probably 100 to 200 of these small congregations meeting in living rooms throughout Jerusalem were formed within days of Pentecost.⁴⁸ If such description is accurate, and it likely is, then the first church would have a centralized nucleus formed around the apostles. The apostles were responsible for the spiritual and physical well being of the whole church including the management of financial resources (Acts 4:32-5:11), the distribution of food (Acts 6:1), the election of the deacons (Acts 6:2-7), and the spiritual discernment of major issues (Acts 15). There was also a distributed arrangement of smaller congregations for body life. There were times for the whole church gathering and there were times for home group gatherings: “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts” (Acts 2:46).

⁴⁷ The word **ἐκκλησία** appears in Acts 2:47 in some Greek manuscripts, but not in the earliest ones.

⁴⁸ David W. Shenk and Ervin R. Stutzman, *Creating Communities of the Kingdom: New Testament Models of Church Planting* (Scottsdale: PA: Herald Press, 1988), 92.

The second appearance of the word “church” in Acts brought the church growth movement into a totally new direction.⁴⁹ “On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria” (Acts 8:1). Up until this point, there were only a few individuals (Peter, John, Stephen, etc.) who suffered for the advancement of God’s kingdom. Then there was a persecution of the whole church. It should be noted that suffering is not the privilege of a few people—every true follower of Jesus Christ will suffer: “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps” (1 Peter 2:21).

Interestingly enough, this suffering of the whole church brought about the further advancement of the gospel because: “all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.” Since the Christians were used to meeting in small congregations, the gospel migration inflicted minimal impact on them as they moved from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria. While they no longer had direct access to the apostles’ teaching, they could continue devoting themselves “to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42). With this, the dynamics of the church at that time were completely changed. Instead of one-church-many-congregations, there was now one mother church with tens and hundreds of daughter churches planted. This change in church dynamics was just the beginning.

The third appearance of the word “church” in Acts is closely associated with the second appearance: “But Saul began to destroy the church” (Acts 8:3). Saul asked the high priest for letters so that he could arrest all the Christians. However, not only was the

⁴⁹ The word **ἐκκλησία** also appears in Acts 7:38. However, it was in Stephen’s speech and the word refers clearly to the assembly of the Israelites in the Old Testament.

church not destroyed, but it actually flourished under such persecution. This brings to mind of Jesus' assurance that: "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18) and "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18). Advancing God's kingdom, especially through church planting may encounter setbacks. However, such obstacles will never be final, and the church eventually may emerge from them stronger and healthier.

The fourth appearance of the word "church" in Acts describes how the new churches regrouped and grew: "Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord" (Acts 9:31). This pattern of persecution, peace, and growth became the paradigm for the future development of the church of Jesus Christ throughout history. The followers of Jesus Christ are to endure through the setback phase of a cycle, with full confidence that peace and growth will return.

The next two appearances of the word "church" in Acts marked the formation of a new daughter church in Antioch which eventually exceeded the mother church in importance with respect to the planting of new churches in regions beyond:

Some of them ... went to Antioch ... a great number of people believed.... News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.... Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul.... So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. (Acts 11:20-26)

The Jerusalem church noticed the potential of the new daughter church in Antioch and provided some valuable resources to help her grow. This was the beginning of selfless collaboration between the two churches. Indeed, the Jerusalem church was not the church of Peter, nor was the Antioch church to become the church of Barnabas.

Rather, both churches were the church of Jesus Christ. Because of this unity, the good news of Jesus Christ was spread further. Later on, the two churches also benefited from each other: the Antioch church looked up to the Jerusalem church to decide on the issue of circumcision when it arose in their subsequent church planting effort, and the new churches planted by the Antioch church provided financial help for the Jerusalem church where many of her constituents were poor. Shenk and Stutzman provide additional information about the Antioch church, the first thriving Gentile Christian community:

Some scholars believe this church soon included 500,000 Christians. It was a missionary church, sending persons like Paul, Barnabas, and others north into Central Asia and east into Mesopotamia and Persia. The Antioch church was involved in helping to plant the thriving congregations of Edessa in Mesopotamia, who became exceedingly dynamic in missionary outreach for the east. Soon the Antioch church would share in translating the Bible into their own Syriac language.⁵⁰

Hereafter, the word “church” is mentioned in Acts with increased frequency, though not exclusively with the beginning of new churches. On the other hand, the planting of many new churches in Acts was implied without the word “church” being mentioned at all. Mostly likely, churches were planted in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:14), Iconium (13:51), Lystra (14:16), Derbe (14:16), Philippi (16:12), Thessalonica (17:1), Berea (17:10), Athens (17:15), Corinth (18:1), Ephesus (18:19), and probably a few other cities during Paul’s three missionary journeys. It was Paul’s standard practice to establish churches in all the cities he visited. Furthermore, he would appoint leaders to guide these churches: “Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust” (Acts 14:23); and he would revisit them to encourage them: “He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches” (Acts 15:41).

⁵⁰ Shenk & Stutzman, 110.

While new churches were routinely planted in different cities, it should be noted that they were planted through various means. In Pisidian Antioch, preaching seemed to suffice: “Paul and his companions went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down ... reading from the Law and the Prophets” (Acts 13:13-15). Their preaching was so well received that: “As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God” (Acts 13:42-43).

In Iconium, signs and wonders were added to confirm their preaching: “At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.... So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders” (Acts 14:1-3).

In Lystra, Paul started with a miracle but there was no mention that he went into the synagogue: “In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet.... He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed and called out, “Stand up on your feet!” At that, the man jumped up and began to walk” (Acts 14:8-10).

In Philippi, Paul went to the river rather than to the synagogue on Sabbath day. There he made his first convert: “On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river.... We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of

those listening was a woman named Lydia.... The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message" (Acts 16:13-14).

It appeared that Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, began new ministries in a variety of ways. At times it was strong preaching; at other times, power evangelism through miracles, at still other times, friendship evangelism. As God's instruments, Christians need to be flexible about the approach in planting new churches without compromising the gospel message. It is important to keep an open mind, allowing God to rule and overrule.

In summary, church planting was the New Testament way of extending the gospel. In the words of Peter Wagner:

Trace the expansion of the Church through Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth and you will see that church planters led the way. This is a Kingdom activity, strongly endorsed by God our King. Collectively, as a community of the Kingdom, we can scarcely feel that we are obeying God if we fail to plant churches and plant them intentionally and aggressively.⁵¹

2.4 Planting Churches Among All Nations

It is clear from the study of the Great Commission that Christians are to bring the good news of Jesus Christ *to all nations* and *to the ends of the earth*. The Greek word for *nations* is **τὰ ἔθνη** from which the English word *ethnic* is derived. Elmer Towns points out that the word **ἔθνη** has three meanings: (1) ethnic groups, (2) Gentiles, (3) nations. In all three, the target is not individuals but groups of people. The best means of evangelizing a group of people is through a ministering assembly of saved people—the church.⁵² This sentiment is echoed by many church growth experts. To the question:

⁵¹ Wagner, 19.

⁵² Elmer L. Towns, in C. Peter Wagner, ed. *Church Growth: State of the Art* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1986), 145.

“How can the good news of Jesus Christ be carried effectively to all nations, tribes, clans, and families of men?” Charles Chaney says:

Certainly gifted, anointed men will have to cross barriers as pioneers to communicate the message to each of these peoples. But the ultimate method is to plant church in each of those clans, tribes, and families. Only by seeing that the Church becomes indigenous to every segment of society, to every culture and language of man, can we be reasonably sure that the gospel will effectively touch all the clans of man.⁵³

At the time of Jesus, however, this idea of reaching out to all nations was quite foreign to the disciples. The Jews were taught that they were the chosen people of God, and all Gentiles were like pigs and dogs unworthy of the mercies of God. This erroneous belief was so ingrained in them that Peter, even after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon him, had difficulty appreciating the fact that the gospel was intended for all nations. It was not until he was sent to the house of Cornelius that he finally began to understand the full implication of the Great Commission (Acts 10). However, God’s blessings and plan of salvation for all the nations did not begin in the New Testament. This message was repeated throughout the Old Testament. One passage from each of the three divisions of the Old Testament—the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings—will be examined to illustrate this point.

In the Law of Moses, Abraham was called to leave his country and his people to go to the place where God would show him (Genesis 12:1). What followed was a manifold promise of God’s blessings: “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through

⁵³ Charles L. Chaney, *Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993), 25.

you” (Genesis 12:2-3). Not only did God promised to bless Abraham and his descendants, God promised that *all peoples on earth* would be blessed through him.

In the Prophets, Isaiah announced the promise of God: “He says: ‘It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth’” (Isaiah 49:6). Again, not only will God’s servant (i.e., the Messiah) restore the Jewish nation, He will also bring light to all nations and then to the ends of the earth.

In the Writings, Psalm 96 says: “Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.... Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth” (Psalm 96:7-9). Roger McNamara refers to this passage on church planting:

God also purposes to receive glory from all peoples.... Every ethnic people group is expected to come near and to extend to the Lord God a sampling of the unique glory and strength of their people, culture and history as a submissive gift of love.... The best way for every people group to come to know, love, prize, and praise Christ is by planting a multitude of new worshipping churches across the globe.⁵⁴

As the disciples slowly carried out the Great Commission, the message of salvation for all nations was affirmed in the Epistles and finally in Revelation. In the Book of Romans, the apostle Paul says: “Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him” (Romans 16:25-26). This will culminate in the final glorious new heaven and new

⁵⁴ Roger N. McNamara & Ken Davis, *The Y.B.H. Handbook of Church Planting: A Practical Guide to Church Planting* (Xulon Press, 2005), 37-381.

earth about which the apostle John prophesied: “The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it” (Revelation 21:23-24).

Throughout the past two millennia, the gospel has spread from Jerusalem westward to the Americas, eastward to Asia and Australia, northward to Northern Europe, and southward to Africa—basically covering the whole globe. There are, however, many holes left in this coverage and there are numerous missionary organizations trying to bring the gospel to these people groups. There exists, however, another avenue to bring the gospel to many of these people groups.

From the first century until the beginning of the last century, ethnic groups were mostly confined to geographical boundaries. As scientific and technological inventions made important breakthroughs in the last century, the world is being transformed to a global village. More and more ethnic minorities are now living in large cities of the world. For example: in 1985 the public school system of Los Angeles was teaching in about 65 different languages! In that same year, 25 American cities enjoyed the distinction of minorities becoming the majority. While immigration to America is not new to this century, the way cultural mixing is new. Shenk and Stutzman attribute the modern trend of ethnic identity preservation to two phenomena. First is the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s stressing that ethnic people are to be respected as equals as others in the mainstream culture. A second major cause contributing to ethnic self-consciousness is the massive immigration into the United States and Canada during the 1970s. These new immigrants are contributing greatly to ethnic pride and identity

within the North American culture. Many of the immigrants, particularly those from Latin America, Asia, and Africa, have no intention of becoming submerged into a homogeneous Anglo culture.⁵⁵

Will simply expanding existing churches in America be adequate to reach out to the nations among us? The answer from many church growth experts is a resounding “no.” They suggest that Christians need to have a different strategy. Charles Chaney, a church planting veteran firmly believes that America will not be won to Christ by existing churches, even if they should suddenly become vibrantly and evangelistically alive. America today is a plural, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, diverse, perverse, openly pagan, and secular society. Most church leaders are willing to affirm that fact, but few as yet are ready to face its implications for strategy. The ultimate method is to plant a church in each of those clans, tribes, and families. Only by seeing that the Church becomes indigenous to every segment of society, to every human culture and language, can Christians be reasonably sure that the gospel will effectively touch all the clans of humanity.⁵⁶

This strategy of planting ethnic churches is not without objections. The question often raised is: “Should not Christians be willing to love and receive into their fellowship all kinds of people?” Paul says that: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). If Christians who live in America are all one in Christ, why should they not use a common language for the fellowship among the God’s people? Furthermore, according to the Bible, the reason there are different languages was because of humankind’s rebellion against God. As a

⁵⁵ Shenk & Stutzman, 126.

⁵⁶ Chaney, 18-25.

result, God confused their language so they would not understand each other (Genesis 11:7). Now that Christ has come and created a new people, should Christians not strive to share in one common language?

The simplistic answer is “Yes!” Every church should welcome every person within its geographical area who believes in Christ for fellowship. When it comes to the church growth, however, it can be overbearing to impose the culture of an existing church on a person new to Christianity. So, to address the question of bringing the gospel to all people, the right question is: “How will the non-Christians most readily receive Christ?”

The answer is:

Plant congregations in every segment of society, so that men and women can find Christ among their peers without having to give up or renounce cultural distinctive which have structured a meaningful life for them in the world. Let the mature Christian cross the barriers to the unbeliever, not force the unbeliever to cross the barriers to come to Christ.⁵⁷

This practical evangelism strategy was advocated by the apostle Paul: “To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law” (1 Corinthians 9:20).

For many years, Donald McGavran and subsequently the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary have been teaching the homogeneous unit principle. This principle recognizes that people feel more comfortable among others of their own group and therefore a church may grow most rapidly when there are large concentrations of the same kind of people from within the neighborhood.⁵⁸ Shenk and Stutzman make the same observation:

⁵⁷ Chaney, 30-31.

⁵⁸ Shenk & Stutzman, 136-137.

Language group churches, such as Chinese-speaking congregations, are unlikely to attract a person who speaks only Spanish or English. For this reason, many first-generation immigrants to the United States or other countries are attracted to a congregation which worships in a language and cultural style like that of their mother country.⁵⁹

Christian sociologist Lyle Schaller also suggested that: “A different order of worship, a different approach to proclaiming the faith, and a different style of ministry can be more effective in reaching people outside the church than that used to service the already committed Christians.”⁶⁰

This strategy of planting ethnic churches should be affirmed as long as new immigrants continue to come to America. However, the second or third generation of such immigrants will almost always assimilate into the primary culture, and often be attracted to churches which reflect a greater diversity of practice. Language and ethnic group churches need to be exceptionally creative in order to provide for the needs of their members who desire to worship with a congregation which embodies diversity.⁶¹ At this moment in time, more and more Chinese continue to come to the Greater Boston area—either as immigrants, students, or short-term exchange scholars. Therefore, the planting of more Chinese churches is not only justified, but also necessary as Christians try to fulfill the Great Commission. Whether this continues be the case in the future should be constantly monitored and evaluated.

2.5 Practical Benefits of Planting New Churches

To conclude the discussion on the motivation for planting churches, it is appropriate to examine the practical benefits of church planting. The first advantage is

⁵⁹ Shenk & Stutzman, 138.

⁶⁰ Lyle E. Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 28.

⁶¹ Shenk & Stutzman, 138.

that it puts evangelism in focus. In a study that appeared in *Christianity Today*, Bruce McNicol estimates that, among evangelical churches, those under three years old will win ten people to Christ per year for every one hundred members. Those churches from three to fifteen years old will win five people per year for every one hundred church members. Finally, after a church reaches age fifteen, the figure drops to three people per year for every one hundred members.⁶² The reason this is true is because existing churches tend to address the needs of their current members. New church plants shift the focus on evangelism and reaching people not actively involved in the life of any worshipping community.⁶³ There is no more practical or cost effective way of bring unbelievers to Christ in a given geographical area than planting new churches.⁶⁴

A second advantage is that it encourages more people to engage in ministry. A new church opens a new dimension of service for all members. At the beginning, everyone has to fill several roles. Tasks that need to be done often call for a stretching of personal gifts until others more able can rise up to the occasion. People in a new church quickly find places of Christian service in the church and involvement in ministry outreach.⁶⁵ Some people can also use this opportunity to put aside their old baggage to start anew. The result is that not only are those involved extremely excited about the new church—which, in turn, attracts other people—but they are open to change and willing to

⁶² Bruce McNicol, “Churches Die with Dignity,” *Christianity Today* (Jan. 14, 1991) 69, cited by Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2004) 44.

⁶³ Schaller, 22.

⁶⁴ Wagner, 21.

⁶⁵ Marlin Mull, *A Biblical Church Planting Manual from the Book of Acts* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2000), 43.

try new and innovative ideas.⁶⁶ Furthermore, planting new churches also open up opportunities for those venturesome personalities who enjoy helping pioneer the new.⁶⁷

A third advantage is that church planting helps to develop new leadership. This applies to both clergy and layperson. Most existing churches have unconsciously placed a ceiling for the advancement of both clergy and lay leadership. As a result it is more difficult for new people to discover and develop their leadership gifts in existing churches. Planting new churches, on the other hand, creates new leadership and ministry challenges and the entire body of Christ subsequently benefits as more ministry opportunities open up.⁶⁸ For the clergy, many pastors who join existing churches have to slowly build up their credibility and trust. However, if they plant churches, new people who are attracted to the church will more readily accept the pastors' leadership.⁶⁹ For the laypersons, new church plants offered the challenge for many of them to rise into leadership, whereas in an older established church, it may take years before believers are invited to participate in leadership responsibilities.

A fourth advantage is that church planting stimulates existing churches. Some are reluctant to start new churches for fear of harming those churches that are currently located in the target community. They feel that doing so could create undesirable competition between brothers and sisters in Christ. The reality is often just the contrary. Congregations usually benefit from intra-denominational competition.⁷⁰ Furthermore, a

⁶⁶ Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2004), 46.

⁶⁷ Schaller, 29.

⁶⁸ Wagner, 20.

⁶⁹ Malphurs, 45.

⁷⁰ Schaller, 29.

new church in the community tends to raise the religious interest of the people in general and if handled properly can be a benefit to existing churches.⁷¹

A fifth advantage is that no one church can reach everyone. Planting different churches can attract different people. Two major issues that often divide the church are the style of worship (or music) and different emphases of the work of the Holy Spirit. If Christians plant churches of different worship style and various emphases on the Holy Spirit, all within the teaching of the Scriptures, these issues of division may work to the advantage of spreading the gospel. After all, it takes many kinds of churches to reach many kinds of people.⁷² Schaller says that: “Planting new churches is the closest we have to a guaranteed means of reaching more people with the Good News that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior.”⁷³

The same can be said about the use of language during worship. When Christ shall come again, people from every nation, tribe, people, and language will worship the Lord together in unity (Revelation 7:9-10). In the mean time, however, the choice of language has a strong impact on how people worship God. Latin was the language of choice during the medieval time. As Latin slowly gave way to various ethnic languages of German, French, English, Italian, Spanish, etc., insisting on using Latin as the common language of worship greatly limited people’s participation and appreciation of worship. In like manner, even though English is a common language in America, many feel more comfortable worshipping in their mother tongue. In fact, in the case of Chinese, there are quite a number of dialects – Mandarin, Cantonese, Taiwanese, etc. A Mandarin speaking

⁷¹ Wagner, 20.

⁷² Church Planting Village, *Introduction to Church Planting with Dr. Ed Stetzer, Session 2*, <http://www.churchplantingvillage.net/>, August 1, 2007.

⁷³ Schaller, 27-28.

Christian will be totally lost worshiping in a Cantonese service, much less a Mandarin speaking seeker. Therefore, using the language of the seekers is of utmost importance to reaching them.

During the establishment of the first church, one cannot but notice that the sign of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was the speaking of tongues according to the languages of the people who were there. Presumably, God can use many different miraculous signs to signify the presence of the Holy Spirit, but he chose this particular one. It signifies that the gospel is not just for the Jews, but for *all* people. If God chose to let people then with the apostles to hear the gospel in their own languages, should Christians not let the people now with them to hear the gospel in their own languages? Peter Wagner says that: “The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches.”⁷⁴ It is perhaps more complete to say that: “The single most effective evangelistic methodology under heaven is planting new churches in the languages of the people to be reached.” Thus, it is necessary to plant Chinese churches to reach out to the Chinese speaking people in the community.

⁷⁴ Wagner, 11.

CHAPTER 3

Principle and Practice of Church Planting

3.1 Introduction

Having established the need to plant more churches including that of Chinese speaking churches in America, the process of church planting will be examined next. There is a plethora of books on the subject. This chapter provides a literature review of the church planting process. Additional comments are provided for the planting of Chinese churches in America, and examples will be drawn from the Boston area churches, especially Chinese churches, whenever available.

3.2 Church Planting Initiative

Many churches are planted every year, and the initiative to plant a church may start with an individual or an organization. Most often, such initiatives begin in Christian organizations whose main focus is to plant churches. This includes a mission agency or a denomination. These organizations typically explore the existence of different people groups in various geographic locales where the gospel is not accessible, or areas in which people will be better reached by having an additional church in the vicinity. Examples of such missionary effort can be seen throughout church history and particularly during the nineteenth century when many mission organizations were formed and many churches were established. The establishment of the Chinese Christian Church in New England (CCCNE) in 1947 as the first Chinese church in the Greater Boston area is a good example of this initiative. What is most notable about this church planting effort is that it

was established through the collaborative effort of several Caucasian churches across denominational associations.

The initiative to plant a new church can also begin with an individual who has a special calling to church planting. Some will plant a church in one place, and then move on to the next, once the church is firmly established. As discussed in Chapter Two, the apostle Paul is an excellent example of such itinerant church planters. Others will plant a church and continue to nurture it for many years. One of the most noted recent examples is Rick Warren. He knew God wanted him to plant a church. After months of prayer and research, he identified the need for the gospel in Southern California and started the Saddleback Valley Community Church. He also openly expressed his desire to nurture the church through its growth, and had stated that Saddleback would be his first and last church.⁷⁵ In a similar fashion, James Tam came to Boston as an assistant pastor of CCCNE. After a few years, he sensed a calling to establish another Chinese church with a more evangelical emphasis in the Boston area. He left CCCNE and founded the Boston Chinese Evangelical Church (BCEC) in 1961 with seventeen other coworkers and retired after pastoring that church for eighteen years.

Occasionally, the initiative to start a new church begins among the people who desire to have a church among them. Then after knowing about this desire or need, a church planter responds to the calling and plants a church there. The Macedonian calling and Paul's response is a good example of this. When Paul was in Asia Minor during his secondary missionary journey, he was about to go south but he went west to Macedonia in Europe because of the call. In the late 1960s, members of a Mandarin speaking Bible study group felt the need to have a Mandarin speaking church in the Greater Boston area.

⁷⁵ Saddleback Church, *The Saddleback Story*, <http://www.saddleback.com/flash/story.asp>, October 1, 2007.

After much prayer, they contacted Pastor Stephen Chiu in Hong Kong to tell him about the need. Pastor Chiu responded to the call by moving to Boston, and in 1969 founded the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston (CBCGB).

A fourth option in which church planting can take place is through an existing church. This may be driven by external and internal factors. The external factors for an existing church to plant another church are similar to those of any Christian organization described earlier. The internal factors, however, are unique to each church planting, due to the already existing churches. An example of such an internal factor is size. Some church growth specialists advocate that there is an optimal size for a church. When a church grows to a certain size, it should consider dividing into two churches.⁷⁶ Another factor leading to church planting is the physical constraints faced by an existing church such as the church growing to the maximum capacity of its facility. Oftentimes, church planting occurs due to the combination of both internal and external factors. In the late 1980s, CBCGB outgrew its church facility in Woburn. At this time, many congregation members lived in the Lowell area where there was no Chinese church. As a result, CBCGB solved their facility problem by sending out some of their congregation to start the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell in 1989.

3.3 Spiritual Preparation

Before the technical aspect of the church planting process is further discussed, it is appropriate to emphasize, above all things, that church planting is primarily a spiritual matter. If a mother church is not spiritually astute, it can easily become engulfed in the technical details of the process and forget that it is engaging in spiritual warfare. Wagner

⁷⁶ Gene Getz, *Sharpening the Focus of the Church* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1974).

says that: “The more deeply I dig beneath the surface of church growth principles, the more thoroughly convinced I become that the real battle is a spiritual battle and that our principal weapon is prayer.”⁷⁷

At the inception of church planting, the leadership of the sending church must spend much time in prayer to seek after God’s will. It is important for church leaders to remember that church growth potentials—church facility expansion and church planting—are often sources of division for well-established churches. Church planting is not to be taken lightly, and the church leadership should seek consensus and be united in their decisions. Such unity can only be achieved through months of ardent prayer combined with an open mind.

After a consensus is reached among the church leadership, the vision to plant a church will then be shared with the congregation. During this period, the congregation should be encouraged to participate in the affirmation of this vision through prayer. Most churches have mid-week prayer meetings, and the vision to plant a church should be the central focus of this corporate prayer time. Additional special prayer meetings concerning church planting may also be held. It is usually during this period of concerted prayers that the initial vision comes more into focus, and the congregation can take ownership of this vision if so affirmed.

Once the vision to plant a church is affirmed by the congregation, the sending church can start a separate weekly prayer group. Those who have the burden for the new church plant are invited to join this new prayer group. The participants of this prayer group may gradually become the core members of the new church plant because of the burden built up over time through prayer. If possible, the location of this new prayer

⁷⁷ C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 46.

meeting will be held in the area where the intended new church will be planted. The content of prayer will be focused on specific matters related to the church planting.

As the plan of church planting becomes more concrete, the vision to plant a new church should be shared with other churches in the community. This invites and involves the Christians in the community at large to participate in this vision—through prayer and perhaps also in action. In the Greater Boston area, the pastors of the twenty or so Chinese churches meet bimonthly for sharing and praying. Whenever a church plans to plant a new Chinese church and makes known of such plan, the pastors rejoice and commit the new church plant to prayer. Through this, it is no longer one church planting another church, but rather the churches uniting together in supporting the planting of a new church.

Needless to say, besides the church-wide or community-wide corporate prayers, the personal prayers of the church leaders and the core church planting members should be *raised to another level*.⁷⁸ It is only with devoting themselves to prayer can church planters and core members stay in tune with God's guidance in the vision to plant a new church.

3.4 Church Planting Methods

After having decided to plant a church, the next step is to decide on how to plant a church. Wagner in his book *Church Planting for a Greatest Harvest* lists twelve *good* ways to plant a church, grouping them into two models.⁷⁹ The modality model includes all methods for a church planted by another church. The sodality model includes all

⁷⁸ Wagner, 47.

⁷⁹ Wagner, 59-75.

methods for a church planted by an individual, several individuals, or a mission organization—without the involvement of an existing church. Table 11 shows a list of methods under the modality and sodality models. Since the focus of this thesis-project is on a church planted by an existing church, only the modality methods as described by Wagner will be discussed.

modality models:	Hiving Off
	Colonization
	Adoption
	Accidental Parenthood
	Satellite Mode
	Multicongregational Churches
	Multiple Campus Model
sodality models:	Mission Team
	Catalytic Church Planter
	Founding Pastor
	Independent Church Planter
	Apostolic Planter

Table 11: Church Planting Models

3.4.1 *Hiving Off*

The first and most common method to plant a church is *hiving off*. In this method, a pastor or leader and a nucleus group of people leave an already existing church to start a new church in a nearby community with the blessings and support of an existing church. Thousands of churches have been planted this way throughout the world. It has the lowest failure rate in comparison to other church planting methods.⁸⁰ The reason for its high success rate is that the leader and the nucleus group of people have already established a good relationship. Since they share the same vision in church planting, they are more united in this effort. Furthermore, the new church plant is more resilient since it

⁸⁰ Fred Herron, *Expanding God's Kingdom Through Church Planting* (iUniverse Incorporated, 2003), 72.

receives support, at least initially, from the sending church spiritually, financially, and administratively.⁸¹ The size of the nucleus group can range from twenty people to a few hundred, with an average size of 43. However, nucleus groups with as many as 5,000 people have been reported.⁸² McNamara and Davis identify three common situations for using the *hiving off* method for church planting:

1. Several church families may already be living in a community outside the primary ministry area of the sending church;
2. A new church may be launched out of a desire to reach other lifestyle, ethnic or socioeconomic groups; and
3. There is a need for another style of worship.⁸³

The new church may become independent after a few years and perhaps form an association with the mother church.⁸⁴ One example of *hiving off* is the formation of the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell (CBCGL) in 1989 as mentioned earlier.

CBCGL was expected to become independent after two years, but became fully functioning without the help of the mother church after just one year. Another example is the Worcester Chinese Gospel Church in Worcester. The church plant was started by the Chinese Gospel Church in Massachusetts in 1999, and is still in the process of becoming independent as of 2007.

3.4.2 Colonization

The *colonization* method is similar to the *hiving off* method in that it involves sending a pastor and a core group of people to plant a new church. The main difference

⁸¹ Stuart Murray, *Church Planting* (Cumbria, U.K.: Paternoster Press, 1998), 262.

⁸² Wagner, 61-62.

⁸³ Roger N. McNamara & Ken Davis, *The Y.B.H. Handbook of Church Planting: A Practical Guide to Church Planting* (Xulon Press, 2005), 120-126.

⁸⁴ Charles L. Chaney, *Church Planting at the End of the Twentieth Century* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993), 106.

between the two methods is that in the colonization method, the church is planted in a far away city rather than a nearby community. For this reason, it is sometimes referred to as the ‘helicopter’ model.⁸⁵ The *colonization* method involves higher risk since all or most of the team members need to change jobs and find new homes. Due the risks involved, the commitment level of the nucleus group must be unusually high. For churches with the capacity to plant another church, *colonization* presents the challenge and opportunity to target an area which is considerably more under-churched than its immediate locality.⁸⁶ As the most outstanding example, the Boston Church of Christ used the *colonization* method and planted churches in Chicago, London, New York, Cairo, Toronto, Johannesburg, Paris, Stockholm, Bombay, Kingston, San Francisco, Atlanta, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, Manila, and Tokyo.⁸⁷ There is no known Chinese church in America that was planted using the *colonization* method.

3.4.3 Adoption

Unlike all the other methods in the modality category, the *adoption* method is initiated by the people group in a particular geographic locale. The common reason for forming a new church through *adoption* may be due to special needs such as the style of worship. These people seek an existing church to act as the mother church because they may have insufficient experience and resources to establish a new church or desire to be under the supervision and protection of a well-established church. In 2006, a group of Chinese Christians in the Greater Boston area sought out the River of Life Christian

⁸⁵ Murray, 269.

⁸⁶ Murray, 269.

⁸⁷ Wagner, 63-64.

Church in Santa Clara, California as their mother church, and formed the River of Life Christian Church in Boston.

3.4.4 Accidental Parenthood

The *accidental parenthood* method is similar to the *hiving off* method except that the pastor and a core group of people leave an existing church to plant a new church as a result of accidental or contentious circumstances. While such circumstances may be due to human failure, God can nevertheless turn them around and use them to advance his kingdom. The example of Paul and Barnabas parting company (Acts 15) at the onset of the second missionary journey is one such example. A most recent example of *accidental parenthood* among the Chinese churches in the Boston area happened in 2002 – a group of over a hundred people left CBCGB due to a disagreement to form the Emeth Chapel in Burlington, Massachusetts. It was quite devastating to the “mother” church. However, CBCGB eventually recovered and the Emeth Chapel became a new Chinese church focused on reaching out to college students as well as people in the Burlington area.

3.4.5 Satellite Mode

The *satellite mode* method is the formation of a new church (or congregation) that is only semiautonomous without any intention of becoming independent. Because of this, the churches thus formed are sometimes called annexes or branch churches. A satellite church has some degree of freedom but maintains a close relationship with the mother church. The reason for planting satellite churches can be geographically,

culturally, or financially motivated. For example, a church may plant a new church in another geographical location to reach out to the people there. However, finding a new dynamic preacher for the church plant may be more difficult. Through simulcast, however, the preaching of the mother church can be sent to the satellite churches, so that the mother church and the satellite churches share the same preaching together though at different locations. The Willow Creek Community Church is an excellent example of a mother church with multiple satellite churches. They have three satellite churches in the Chicago area. They claim that: “Willow Creek Community Church is now less than 30 minutes away for many people in the Chicagoland area.”⁸⁸

3.4.6 *Multicongregational Churches*

The *multicongregational churches* method refers to the establishment of another congregation within the same church facility. The new congregation may be the same as the existing congregation but worship at different time due to the capacity of the church facility. It may also be of a different worship style or language medium. This is most familiar and common to Chinese churches in America since they often have two different cultures and two different languages among the members of their congregations. It occurs so often that it is usually not associated with church planting as it should be and is. In a typical Chinese church in America (or most ethnic churches for that matter), a church is established having the native language as the medium of worship. After a decade or two, the second generation, whose primary language is English, emerges. In most cases, their needs are first met by the use of earphone translation. With more people requiring

⁸⁸ Willow Creek Community Church, *The Regional Ministry of Willow Creek Community Church*, <http://www.willowcreek.org/regional/>, October 1, 2007.

translation, however, earphone translation is deemed inadequate or cumbersome. An interpreter is then invited to the podium to translate for the speaker, phrase by phrase. This is better than earphone translation but is still not completely satisfactory. Eventually, the formation of a new English speaking congregation in the same church becomes inevitable. The CBCGB English congregation started in 1987 after many years of anticipation and planning following the steps described above. It is a typical example of this *multicongregational churches* method.

3.4.7 Multiple Campus Model

In the *multiple campus model* method, both the existing church and the new church plant are under the same church leadership and financial management. Technically, no new church is formed. In reality, however, a new church plant is established in another geographical location. Typically, the pastoral staff will rotate to preach in the different campuses. Though the different campuses are considered equal, the mother church, sometimes considered as the main campus, is the de facto first among equal. Historically, however, multiple campuses have at times begun as the same church but ended up as separate churches.⁸⁹ In 2003, the BCEC established a new church facility in Newton, about 15 miles west of its main location in Chinatown. The church leadership explicitly desired that the two church facilities remain as two campuses of one church, and it remains as such to this day. In fact, BCEC is a *multiple campus* and *multicongregational* church. At this time, the Chinatown campus has four congregations in three languages—two in Cantonese, one in English, and one in Mandarin, while the Newton campus has a Cantonese congregation and an English congregation.

⁸⁹ Wagner, 69.

Of the above mentioned seven church planting methods, the *hiving off* is the most popular method of church planting among Chinese churches in America. This is the method that was used to plant the CBCGB-Metrowest church. The entire process of planting the Metrowest church will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

3.5 Church Planter

Next, the preparation of human resources needed for church planting will be examined. The most important human resource often mentioned by church planting experts is pastoral leadership. From his experience, Lyle Schaller concludes that the best way to start a new church that will attract a large number of people and continue to grow in number is to find the right pastor and for him to serve as pastor for a minimum of twenty-five years.⁹⁰ However, Schaller also observes that many church planting efforts often focus on other secondary matters. He gives five reasons for this phenomenon:

1. Many prefer to believe that the pastors should be seen as a batch of interchangeable parts—no pastor is indispensable;
2. It is difficult to identify in advance a highly effective church planting pastor;
3. There is a widespread discomfort with long pastorates;
4. The appointment of the pastor may be vested in a regional director who does not have intimate knowledge of the congregation; and
5. There is a shortage of competent church planting pastors.⁹¹

In the above list, reason (5) may be an unavoidable reality, but the others are mental traps which need to be avoided. The problem of the shortage of competent church planting pastors is especially severe among Chinese churches. In general, the situation in America is that many Chinese churches are established without any pastors. During a recent retreat with the pastors of the Chinese churches in the New England area, it was

⁹⁰ Lyle E. Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), 38.

⁹¹ Schaller, 38-41.

estimated that nine out of about 30 Chinese churches are without any pastors. In addition to these churches, many established Chinese churches are also looking for additional pastors. Given this fact, Chinese Christians often have to choose between establishing a Chinese church without any pastor or not having a Chinese church at all.

Given that new churches can be planted by pastors or other personnel, the term *church planters* rather than *pastors* is used to denote these people. To understand the quality desired in a church planter, one needs to examine the basic ministry components that are to be carried out for a new church plant. Daniel Sinclair gives the following list of roles that need to be carried out:

1. Discipling younger believers – loving care as well as exhortations, ministering through relationship, and training;
2. Gathering believers – initiating groups, and persuading believers to join these groups;
3. Cultivating body life – mutual care for one another, prayer, and worship;
4. Teaching the Word – leading in group study and building believers up in “sound doctrine;”
5. Problem solving;
6. Pastoring – giving care and support to individual and couples; and
7. Developing leaders.⁹²

Given the above list of responsibilities, it is pertinent that the church planter should be carefully chosen. Above all else, a good church planter must have the character of church leaders as prescribed by the Bible. There are several lists of character in the Bible, and the following is the list from 1 Timothy 3:1-7:

- a. above reproach;
- b. the husband of but one wife;
- c. temperate;
- d. self-controlled;
- e. respectable;
- f. hospitable;
- g. able to teach;

⁹² Daniel Sinclair, *A Vision of the Possible: Pioneer Church Planting in Teams* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2006), 183-184.

- h. not given to drunkenness;
- i. not violent but gentle;
- j. not quarrelsome;
- k. not a lover of money;
- l. manage his own family well;
- m. his children obey him with proper respect;
- n. not be a recent convert; and
- o. good reputation with outsiders.⁹³

The above list should always be kept in mind in finding the right church planter.

Furthermore, almost every church planting book discusses the additional qualities required of a good church planter. Among them, Stetzer gives the most succinct description, using an acronym called the church planter's SHAPE.⁹⁴

Spiritual gifts. These are the gifts of ministry bestowed by the Holy Spirit.

Malphurs considers the following six gifts to be the most important for a church planter:

1. *Apostleship*: the capacity to adapt and minister cross-culturally;
2. *Evangelism*: the desire to communicate clearly the gospel of Jesus Christ to unbelievers either individually or in a group context;
3. *Faith*: the ability to envision what needs to be done and to trust God to accomplish it;
4. *Leading*: having a clear and significant vision, and are able to communicate it in such a way that they influence others to pursue that vision;
5. *Preaching*: the God-given ability to communicate God's Word with clarity and power in a culturally relevant way so that it applies to the specific situation of the hearers; and
6. *Teaching*: the ability to understand and communicate the Scriptures clearly and with spiritual insight.⁹⁵

Heart or passion. This is the burden to establish an outreach toward a specific people group, in a particular location or through a specific type of ministry. Passion is particularly important in assessment for two reasons. First, it provides the necessary

⁹³ Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century: A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2004), 85-88.

⁹⁴ Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2006), 81-82.

⁹⁵ Malphurs, 85-86.

direction for ministry in general and spiritual gifts in particular. The other reason is that it provides the necessary motivation to start and continue the church planting process.⁹⁶

Ability. This refers to the entrepreneurial talents useful in planting. Many people consider ability and spiritual gifts as interchangeable terms. Stetzer, however, makes a distinction between the two. In this case, spiritual gifts include the talents as specified in the Scriptural spiritual gifts passages, and ability covers the talents that are not listed as spiritual gifts in the Bible.

Personality type. This is an analysis and characterization of the personality of the church planters which can be assessed in a variety of ways. One way is the classic *choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, and melancholy*, based on the work of Hippocrates in the first century. Another is the DiSC model – *dominance, influence, steadiness, and conscientiousness* – developed by Geier and Downey. The third one is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) - *introverted-extroverted, sensing-intuitive, thinking-feeling, and judging-perceiving* pairs.⁹⁷ Of the three personality type analysis tools, the MBTI is the most often used, and based on this tool, the following personality types have the highest potential for successfully planting new churches: *inventor* (ENTP), *field marshal* (ENTJ), and *champion* (ENFP).⁹⁸

Experiences. This is the practical knowledge and hunches built up over the years. There are many tools for describing experiences helpful to a church planter. One example of such tool is provided by the Emerging Leadership Initiative (ELI).⁹⁹ ELI

⁹⁶ Malphurs, 86.

⁹⁷ Malphurs, 88-89.

⁹⁸ Evangelical Free Church of America, http://www.efca.org/planting/media/self_asmt_bklt_steve_e_0403_proofed_&_on_web.doc, October 1, 2007.

⁹⁹ Emerging Leadership Initiative, http://www.elichurchplanting.com/cp_instructions.asp, October 1, 2007.

offers an online assessment which allows potential church planters to benchmark against the successful church planters. The assessment will indicate the experience level compared to successful church planters.

Needless to say, a person with all the above gifts and qualities is difficult to find. Nonetheless, it is a good list to keep in mind as a church searches for and identifies the most suitable church planter(s).

3.6 Mission and Vision

Once the church planter is identified or the church planting team is formed, the next step for church planting is to develop a mission statement for the new church. Generally speaking, the intention of a genuine mission statement is to keep church members and visitors aware of the church's purpose.¹⁰⁰ Malphurs goes into more details and lists eight functions of the church's mission statement as to:

1. Dictate the ministry's direction;
2. Focus on the church's function;
3. Spell out the congregation's preferred future;
4. Provide a template for decision making;
5. Inspire church unity;
6. Shape the church's strategy;
7. Enhance ministry effectiveness; and
8. Facilitate evaluation.¹⁰¹

Therefore, it is a worthwhile investment of the time and effort to come up with a good mission statement appropriate for the new church plant.

Closely associated with the church's mission statement is its vision statement. While the mission statement emphasizes purpose, the vision statement focuses on the

¹⁰⁰ Wikipedia contributors, "Mission," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Mission&oldid=197390837>, October 1, 2007.

¹⁰¹ Malphurs, 124.

desired outcome. It is a vivid, idealized description of the desired outcome that inspires, energizes and helps the church members create a mental picture of the church's target.¹⁰²

Again, Malphurs goes into more details and lists five functions of the church's vision statement as to:

1. Communicate where the church is going;
2. Provide a snapshot of the church's direction;
3. Challenge the people to accomplish the ministry;
4. Inspire people to greater efforts for God; and
5. Touch the emotions.¹⁰³

The mission and vision of the new church need to be reiterated very often, perhaps at least once a month in order to help the new church members remain aware and be reminded of the purpose and goal of the new church plant. These reiterations should be presented in a variety of ways and circumstances including preaching, teaching, and business meetings.

3.7 Church Planting Coworkers

Whether the new church will accomplish its mission and vision depend largely on its ability to recruit and equip quality lay leaders as soon as possible. Malphurs points out that the basic requirements for leadership in addition to natural and/or spiritual leadership gifts will be character, vision, and influence. He goes on to suggest that the church planter or a member of the church planting team should assume the responsibility for training the leaders as a group and individually. They could meet once or twice a month, emphasizing development in such areas as character, knowledge, and skill. The

¹⁰² Time Thoughts, <http://www.timethoughts.com>, October 1, 2007.

¹⁰³ Malphurs, 130.

ultimate purpose for recruiting and training these leaders is for service and ministry to the church body.¹⁰⁴

McNamara and Davis suggest five ways of developing lay leaders:

1. Spend time with apprentice leaders - the most effective way to develop lay leaders is to spend time with them;
2. Model ministry – your example is the most effective teaching tool you possess;
3. Provide training as people serve – people learn through personal involvement, through trial and error;
4. Establish standards for leaders – different leadership positions have different standards; and
5. Use debriefings to hold leaders accountable – you cannot make disciples (or leaders) without accountability.¹⁰⁵

McNamara and Davis go on to point out that it is necessary to continuously motivate lay leaders as everyone in leadership and ministry needs encouragement. They describe five ways to motivate them:

1. Cast the vision again and again – it is amazing how quickly people can lose sight of the vision that led them to accept a ministry or leadership position;
2. Recognize and reward your leaders – sometimes the reward is in the form of public commendation, other times, the reward takes the form of increased responsibilities;
3. Communicate confidence in your leaders – people tend to perform at the level of expectation you have for them;
4. Give consistent encouragement to your leaders – everyone needs encouragement and someone to pick them up when they are down, there are disappointments in ministry; and
5. Allow your leaders to switch – it is not a crime to switch jobs or to step down from a leadership position, normally you ask people for a year's commitment to a ministry role, but if they are not comfortable in that role, allow them to switch roles or to step down graciously without making them feel guilty.¹⁰⁶

Besides the quality of the coworkers, one also needs to examine the responsibilities of the coworkers in a new church. Stetzer suggests seven important

¹⁰⁴ Malphurs, 176.

¹⁰⁵ McNamara & Davis, 319-323.

¹⁰⁶ McNamara & Davis, 323-325.

positions that need to be fulfilled: (1) *worship leader*; (2) *preschool children minister*; (3) *assimilation coordinator*; (4) *evangelism networker*; (5) *spiritual gifts mobilizer*; (6) *welcome coordinator*; and (7) *financial organizer*.¹⁰⁷ In addition to these main coworkers, perhaps the *spiritual formation minister* should be added to this list and the *preschool children minister* be broadened to *children and youth minister*. Their roles in general and in the context of a Chinese church will be described in more details.

3.7.1 *Worship Leader*

“The *worship leader* must be a talented music director with the ability to lead the congregation toward a culturally appropriate encounter with God. If the person does not direct the church’s music, he or she should have the ability to assess and empower other leaders for music ministry.”¹⁰⁸ In the case of a Chinese church, the role of the worship leader is at the same time “easier” and “harder” than the Caucasian church counter-part. On the one hand, it is easier because Chinese churches typically are not at the “frontier” of worship music, and the congregation’s demand is much less than that of a Caucasian church. On the other hand, it is harder because many Chinese—especially those from Mainland China—are not as musically trained, making it difficult to find good pianists or vocalists. To complicate matters, some of the songs (hymns or praise songs) for worship are translated from English, some are composed by Chinese in America, and some are written by Chinese in Mainland China. It is therefore difficult to keep abreast of the songs available, and to choose songs that suit the variety of people in the congregation.

¹⁰⁷ Stetzer, 107-112.

¹⁰⁸ Stetzer, 107.

Thus, a good worship leader with such musical expertise is a big help for planting a Chinese church.

3.7.2 Preschool Children Minister

“The *preschool children minister* is a childcare worker who sacrifices personal fellowship with the adult group to serve the children who attend. This person should mature in the ability to delegate tasks as the church grows.”¹⁰⁹ The *preschool children minister* can also be broadened to the children and youth minister. Chinese are especially mindful about the education and learning of their children. A good children’s ministry can attract many Chinese families, Christians and seekers alike. One main obstacle for the children’s ministry in a Chinese church is that many Chinese adults are fluent in Chinese but may have more difficulty communicating in English. Another obstacle is that Chinese children may understand only Chinese when they are young, but understand very little Chinese when they are in middle school or high school. Finding suitable children and youth ministry coworkers is a real challenge due to language barriers and a priority on the quality of the education.

3.7.3 Assimilation Coordinator

“The *assimilation coordinator* develops and oversees ways for involving church members and guests more deeply in the life of the congregation. This layperson is the organizer of small groups. The assimilation system will involve guests and members in meaningful relationships, ministries, and services within and beyond the

¹⁰⁹ Stetzer, 108.

congregation.”¹¹⁰ Church planting expert Win Arn lists eight characteristics of an *incorporated member*. These characteristics describe a person who had successfully assimilated into a new church, and are intended to help the congregation develop methods for assimilation.

1. New members should be able to list at least seven new friends they have made in the church;
2. New members should be able to identify their spiritual gifts;
3. New members should be involved in at least one (preferably several) roles/tasks/ministries in the church, appropriate to their spiritual gifts;
4. New members should be actively involved in a small fellowship (face-to-face) group;
5. New members should demonstrate a regular financial commitment to the church;
6. New members should personally understand and identify with church goals.
7. New members should attend worship services regularly; and
8. New members should identify unchurched friends and relatives and take specific steps to help them toward responsible church membership.¹¹¹

In a typical Chinese church, the overall fellowship ministry coordinator is equivalent to the *assimilation coordinator* as suggested by Stetzer. The congregation is usually divided into smaller fellowship groups. The well-being of these fellowship groups makes a tremendous impact on the growth of a church. The dominant activity during fellowship group time is Bible study. A good fellowship group leader must be versatile in leading Bible study as well as caring for its members. When such a combination of gifts is absent, it may be advisable to have one leader for Bible study and one for caring.

¹¹⁰ Stetzer, 109.

¹¹¹ Malphurs, 324-325

3.7.4 *Evangelism Networker*

“The *evangelism networker* promotes activities to reach the unchurched and also assists other leaders in evangelizing the unchurched through their existing networks.”¹¹²

For most Chinese churches in America, there are typically three different target groups of people for evangelism: (1) blue collar immigrants; (2) students, scholars, and some young professional families who have recently settled in America; and (3) English speaking second generation Chinese. Each target group requires a different mindset and gift-set to reach. In the Greater Boston area, the target group for the planting of a Mandarin speaking church will likely be the students, scholars and young professionals. From past experience, the most effective activities to reach out to them include more intellectual discussions of the Christian faith and the Bible as well as the practical workshops on family living in America.

3.7.5 *Spiritual Gifts Mobilizer*

“The church’s *spiritual gifts mobilizer* is a coach who assists persons in identifying their spiritual gifts and their place in ministry within and beyond the congregation.”¹¹³ Most Chinese churches lack a systematic program to help believers to discover, develop, and deploy their spiritual gifts. Many churches do not have this mobilizer, and it is only a small exaggeration to say that “when a job needs to be done, any warm body is welcome.” Having someone serve as the *spiritual gifts mobilizer* will be beneficial to the long term health of a new Chinese church since he or she helps

¹¹² Stetzer, 109.

¹¹³ Stetzer, 110.

members of the congregation to discover, develop, and deploy their spiritual gifts in building up the body of Christ.

3.7.6 *Welcome Coordinator*

“A *welcome coordinator* organizes greeters, ushers, and other volunteers who make gathering with the church a warm and friendly experience for guests.”¹¹⁴ While many Chinese churches have welcome coordinators, many churches also struggle with effectively fulfilling the welcome coordinator’s duties. According to the Vision New England Recent Convert Study,¹¹⁵ 71% of recent converts are through the power of relationship, and it is the single most important factor in seeing a person come to a living faith in Christ. Simply greeting and calling newcomers is not adequate, and subsequent follow-up call and connecting newcomers with other Christians through small groups or fellowship groups is imperative.

3.7.7 *Financial Organizer*

“The *financial organizer* oversees the new church’s finances. This is especially important if a sponsoring church does not take care of these matters for the new church.”¹¹⁶ Most Chinese church plants will be financially and administratively supported by the sending church for several years. Nonetheless, it is important to begin developing a *financial organizer* as soon as possible for a more seamless transition to independence.

¹¹⁴ Stetzer, 111.

¹¹⁵ Vision New England, *Vision New England Recent Convert Study*, http://sites.silasparkers.com/CC/CDA/Content_Blocks/CC_Printer_Friendly_Version_Utility/1,,PTID14438%7CCHID114781%7CCHID2314274,00.html, October 1, 2007.

¹¹⁶ Stetzer, 111.

3.7.8 *Spiritual Formation Minister*

In the Chinese churches in America, it is very common to find a strong adult Sunday School program. This is perhaps due to the fact that many Chinese churches evolved from Bible study groups on college campuses. As a result, the systematic study and teaching of the Bible is highly valued, and many churches conduct adult Sunday School classes. Therefore, the *spiritual formation minister*, who plans the adult Sunday School, church retreats, and other related programs, is a very important coworker in Chinese churches.

3.7.9 *Teamwork and Pitfalls*

There are, of course, many other coworkers in the church who play important roles and are necessary to the success of a church plant. Every Christian should try to get involved in ministry. This is especially true and pertinent for a new church plant since there are many ministry areas that are still developing. In the healthiest of churches, the pastor is doing the leading while the lay people are doing the ministry.¹¹⁷

Daniel Sinclair, a veteran overseer of church planting teams in the mission field, suggests that: “the team leader has authority commensurate with this high level of responsibility. Team leaders are encouraged to exert strong leadership when appropriate, which will not always be popular.”¹¹⁸ Sinclair continues on to examine the balancing force in this teamwork: “even though team leaders could be highly directive and make all decisions unilaterally, I don’t encourage that. The team will feel that the leader is being

¹¹⁷ Wagner, 117.

¹¹⁸ Sinclair, 50

authoritarian and heavy-handed. While that level of taking authority may be necessary once in a while, most of the time consensus-building works better.”¹¹⁹

Sinclair warns that: “probably the biggest source of pain on the field for workers is from fellow teammates. Interpersonal conflicts, clashing expectations and opinions, unresolved offenses, and irreconcilable differences with leaders often bring healthy team life grinding to a halt.”¹²⁰ He lists the top ten team pitfalls for church planting. Although they pertain to planting a church in a missionary setting, most are applicable to any church planting effort, particularly in a cross-cultural setting such as planting Chinese churches in the Greater Boston area:

1. Not being very clear regarding the people group and location the Lord is calling the team to work amongst.
2. Workers absorbed in high-hours jobs, even when not fully necessary.
3. Male workers trying to do everything out of their home, rather than basing ministry from an office or something.
4. Allowing team misunderstandings or team leader / team member differences to fester and go on too long.
5. The team leader not building the team well. Recruiting anything with a *pulse*, rather than co-workers with a level of proven gifts and maturity.
6. The team leader not responding well to oversight: undervaluing the role of accountability and coaching.
7. Weak commitment to personal and corporate prayer about the work, with expectancy.
8. Not really understanding or being convinced about church planting.
9. Excess time in non-church-planting activities, such as team meetings & team activities, meetings with other workers, correspondence with folks back home, email, etc.
10. The team leader being weak, passive, insecure or non-directive in his leadership role—usually due to insecurity and fear of rejection. Not being clear with team members concerning expectation. People begin to operate as a group of “independent contractors” rather than as a team. Team leaders must learn to stay graciously firm about team standards.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Sinclair, 50-51.

¹²⁰ Sinclair, 31-32.

¹²¹ Sinclair, 281-282.

3.8 Core Group Size and Anticipated Church Size

How big should the core group be before the first worship service can be launched?

The usual rule-of-thumb is that it needs at least ten to twelve seed families.¹²² Research by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has shown that Southern Baptist churches going public with under fifty members have three times the rate of failure as those that start with over fifty.¹²³ There are always exceptions, such as CBCGB which started with only thirteen people. However, churches like this are merely exceptions rather than the norm.

Wagner suggests that the required core group size depends largely on the anticipated church size in the future. If the long-range plan for the church is to be under two hundred, the critical mass can be as small as twenty-five or thirty adults. However, if the plan is for the church to grow to over two hundred, the critical mass should be between fifty and one hundred adults.¹²⁴ Wagner observes that new churches tend to grow up to around 200, and plateau off with ups and downs almost indefinitely. He goes on to describe how a church can overcome the 200 barrier.

The first factor is the staffing level. Wagner suggests starting the new church with two staff members. If this is impossible, start with one, plan to add a second before the church grows to 100 active adults, a third before 200, and so on until there are 500 active adults, safely past the 200 barrier. He points out that unfortunately many people have been mentally programmed with staff ratios designed for maintenance, not for growth.¹²⁵

¹²² Malphurs, 187.

¹²³ Wagner, 120.

¹²⁴ Wagner, 119-120.

¹²⁵ Wagner, 129-130.

The second factor is the fellowship groups. The typical church under 200 adults is one single fellowship group, called by experts such as Carl Dudley and Lyle Schaller a *single cell church*.¹²⁶ To exceed the 200 barrier, the church needs to plan for many fellowship groups from the onset – willingly and willfully sacrificing the intimacy of a small church where everyone knows everyone else. Such interpersonal intimacy will occur in each fellowship group.

The third factor is that the church planting pastor must be an equipper rather than an enabler.¹²⁷ An enabler is leader who is much more hands-on while. An equipper is a leader who actively sets goals for a congregation, obtains goal ownership from the people, and sees that each church member is properly motivated and equipped to do his or her part in accomplishing the goals.

The fourth factor is that the church planting pastor needs to be a rancher rather than a shepherd. A shepherd is a pastor who personally cares for the sheep while a rancher delegates the pastoral care to others.¹²⁸ In both cases, the sheep are cared for, but the care is provided by the pastor in the case of the pastor as shepherd, but by many under-shepherds in the case of the pastor as rancher. Having many under-shepherds will build up a stronger caring network.

The fifth factor is the facilities. If it is the goal for the new church to exceed 200 people, the church planters should start the new church in rented or leased facilities lest the church growth becomes confined by the permanent facility. The most common

¹²⁶ Wagner, 130-131.

¹²⁷ Wagner, 131-133.

¹²⁸ Wagner, 133-135.

conscious decision that church planters have made through the years to lock their church under the 200 barrier is to buy and build too soon.¹²⁹

The sixth factor is the church bylaws. Wagner suggests waiting to draw up a full-fledged constitution and bylaws for the church until it has at least 500 members. The basic reason for this is that most of the existing traditional models for church constitutions and bylaws tend to siphon off the authority of the pastor and put it in the hands of lay people.¹³⁰

Wagner's suggestions above may be good advice for a Caucasian church in America, but may not be fully applicable for the planting of most Chinese churches (in America) since few Chinese churches, except those in metropolitan areas with high Chinese population, exceed 200 people. McNamara and Davis point out the fact that the average church in America has less than a hundred people attending it.¹³¹ Nonetheless, it is well for Chinese church planters to understand the six factors pointed out by Wagner and to make conscious decisions about each factor.

3.9 Location

Once the core group reaches the critical mass to start a new church, the next step is finding a suitable location and making plans to invite people. Wagner suggests that nothing is more influential on the success or failure of the church planting project than finding the proper location which is visible, accessible, and safe for the targeted people to be reached. It is well worth whatever time, energy and money it takes to develop a sound

¹²⁹ Wagner, 135.

¹³⁰ Wagner, 135-136.

¹³¹ McNamara & Davis, 223.

feasibility study.¹³² Finding the proper location for the new church consists of first identifying the proper city or town and then the facility or site within that city or town.

At the foundation of the selection of the city or town for the new church is a demographic study. There are three main benefits for conducting a demographic study. First, it helps to identify the target audience – who lives where and how many there are. Second, demographic information will give an estimate beforehand of the degree of receptivity the members of the target audience will have to the new church. Third; a good feasibility study with up-to-date demographics builds confidence in the mother church, the church planter, and the potential members.¹³³

Wagner lists twelve sources of demographic information: (1) U.S. census data; (2) city or county planning commissions; (3) school boards; (4) public utilities; (5) local universities; (6) lending institutions; (7) chambers of commerce; (8) radio stations; (9) public libraries; (10) real estate firms; (11) newspapers; and (12) commercial geodemographics.¹³⁴ With the rapid information access through the internet, many of the demographic data are available online. Many states, cities, and towns publish their own demographic data on their websites. Furthermore, because of the ease of collecting such data, commercial geodemographic information has also become more affordable.

After identifying the city or town, the next step is to find a suitable site. Typically, a new church will start using a temporarily rented facility. Malphurs lists twelve important factors to be considered for a church site; (1) appearance; (2) visibility; (3) accessibility; (4) size; (5) cleanliness; (6) location; (7) potential ministries; (8) cost; (9)

¹³² Wagner, 77.

¹³³ Wagner, 81-82.

¹³⁴ Wagner, 83-87.

storage; (10) signage; (11) parking; and (12) reputation.¹³⁵ Sinclair gives a shorter list of location, cost, availability, and adaptability.¹³⁶

New churches can save money by renting facilities in the beginning. By renting facilities, the cost overhead is kept low so the new churches can spend money on supporting the ministry staff and on outreach and community events, instead of on buildings.¹³⁷ This will also allow the new churches to concentrate on internal relational matters including defining and refining its mission and purpose, and give them time to slowly build up their finances before they buy or build permanent facilities. However, the temporary meeting place should be in reasonably close proximity to the intended permanent site.¹³⁸

The most common place where new churches meet is inside other churches. Many ethnic churches are started by renting space from an existing church's facilities. A second common location is to meet in public schools. However, if the goal of the new church is to concentrate on teenagers and young adults, the public elementary school usually is a bad choice for a temporary meeting place.¹³⁹ Some churches choose to meet in theaters and find them to be helpful locations because they are more spacious and accessible.¹⁴⁰ Others prefer hotel or motel conference rooms – they are often full during the week but empty on weekends, resulting in highly negotiable prices.¹⁴¹ Another possibility is to meet in a small store in a retail area for the first several months. This

¹³⁵ Malphurs, 194-199.

¹³⁶ Schaller, 60.

¹³⁷ Stetzer, 240.

¹³⁸ Schaller, 63.

¹³⁹ Schaller, 60-61.

¹⁴⁰ Stetzer, 240-242.

¹⁴¹ Wagner, 120-121.

usually has the benefit of high visibility and many opportunities to encourage “drop-ins” during shopping hours.¹⁴²

In the 1960s, a popular declaration of a truly mission-minded congregation was not to waste its money on land and buildings, but instead devote all its resources to missions and outreach. Today far greater affirmation is being given in support of the traditional concept of each congregation owning and controlling its own permanent meeting place.¹⁴³ When a church rents space for an extended period of time, “rental fatigue” develops. This describes the weariness experienced by the core group from having to set up and tear down every week over a long period of time. A more serious risk is that potential future members may drift away when they realize the limitations on programming due to these rented facilities.¹⁴⁴

If the church decides to build or buy, a congregation must be certain that the space and location it chooses does not limit the growth of the church. When a new church decides to build, its choice of location is crucial. A building located in a convenient accessible site can enhance the fledgling congregation in developing its community identity. Size-wise, the rule of thumb is to look for three-fourth to one acre per 100 adults who will be part of the church of the future. Financially, a new church should commit no more than one-third of its weekly receipts for debt service.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Schaller, 61.

¹⁴³ Schaller, 63.

¹⁴⁴ Schaller, 60-61.

¹⁴⁵ Stetzer, 246-250.

3.10 Promotion

To bring more people to the new church, there are many promotional activities that have been proven to work at least in certain settings. The first is through home Bible study groups,¹⁴⁶ which provides a personal and friendly environment to invite people to come. Many Chinese churches that are in existence today trace their origin back to Bible study groups, even though these Bible study groups had no explicit intention to form churches at the time. Nowadays, many Chinese church planting efforts begin with having Bible study groups as their springboard.

The second promotional activity is the sponsoring of children's events that are specifically designed to reach the children and their parents.¹⁴⁷ This has worked very well for the planting of new Chinese churches. Chinese are known to care a lot about the upbringing of their children. Parents tend to involve their children in an endless list of activities, such as music lessons, dance lessons, soccer camp, Chinese school, etc. An educational and fun church program for the children will definitely draw the parents' attention and attract them to the church.

The third promotional activity is the sponsoring of adult events.¹⁴⁸ Given that Chinese families care much about raising their children, they are often interested in classes and workshops that address this topic. Many Chinese churches have more success in attracting non-Christians to come to church through such workshops rather than purely Bible study groups. Another adult event that is very popular is the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL). In some cases, a husband comes to America to study, while his wife mostly tends to the family. Attending ESL classes give the wives

¹⁴⁶ Wagner, 99-100.

¹⁴⁷ Wagner, 103-104.

¹⁴⁸ Wagner, 104-105

the opportunity to get out of the house and learn English. Furthermore, many young Chinese families, after settling down and having children, invite the grandparents to live with them and care for their grandchildren. These elderly people typically do not understand English and often feel trapped at homes. The church can thus provide programs to serve them and help them adjust. In so doing, it also creates opportunities to share the Gospel with them.

The fourth promotional activity is door-to-door visitation. This has worked wonderfully for some, flopped for others, and many in between.¹⁴⁹ This method does not work as well for Chinese churches. The homes visited are usually Chinese, and if it can be determined a priori that the house is occupied by a Chinese family, it is likely that someone in the church may already know that family. In such cases, it can be more effective for members to personally invite their friends instead of door-to-door invitations to strangers. One successful door-to-door visitation program is for the church to identify potential visitors who have been to the church or were referred to the church. The church can then send out trained evangelism teams, using such program such as provided by Evangelism Explosion International,¹⁵⁰ to visit such people. This has worked very well in CBCGB over the past eighteen years.

The fifth promotional activity is through special gatherings. While many non-Christians may not want to come to church on a regular basis, they are willing to visit a church occasionally. Many Chinese churches sponsor evangelistic meetings featuring well-known speakers, pre-evangelistic gatherings during Thanksgiving, Christmas, and

¹⁴⁹ Wagner, 101-103.

¹⁵⁰ Evangelism Explosion International, <http://eeinternational.org>, October 1, 2007.

Chinese New Year, or more social gatherings such as picnic and camping. These have proved to be effective tools to reach out to non-Christians.

There are many other promotional activities including direct mail,¹⁵¹ phone invitation,¹⁵² advertising,¹⁵³ and telemarketing¹⁵⁴ mentioned by most books on church planting. Some churches use them with much success while others find them ineffective. Nonetheless, these should be some idea to keep in mind during church planting.

3.11 Conclusion

Planting a church is rewarding, but it is also risky and can be emotionally draining. For example, the *hiving off* method has been the most common and successful method used to plant a new church by existing Chinese churches. There are, however, many potential pitfalls. One needs to beware the difficulties of the separation of the new church core members from the sending church.¹⁵⁵ The same emotional adjustment often happens in the sending church. Like a mother giving birth to a baby, the sending church will dispatch some of their key people. If the process is not carefully planned and managed, it may devastate the mother church. If it is done well, however, the morale of the sending church can be significantly boosted. Furthermore, the now empty seats may stimulate renewed evangelistic efforts in the mother church. Many studies suggest that the mother church replaces the *hived off* members in 6-12 months.¹⁵⁶ Such is the case of

¹⁵¹ Schaller, 98-104.

¹⁵² Schaller, 90-97.

¹⁵³ Wagner, 106-107.

¹⁵⁴ Wagner, 107-109.

¹⁵⁵ Wagner, 99.

¹⁵⁶ Murray, 262.

the planting of CBCGB-Metrowest – CBCGB replaced the *hived off* members within one year.

Most of all, the relationship between the mother church and daughter church should be carefully maintained and nurtured to demonstrate the unity of the body of Christ. This will set an example of the strong message of love, which is what people are often yearning for, and hopefully lead them to the Kingdom of God.

A survey made by *Leadership Magazine* found that the average time for a new church to become independent is 12 months, after which the new church should be on its own with finances, personnel and program.¹⁵⁷ It is anticipated that the same process of reproduction will continue in the new church. Such was the case when the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell (CBCGL), which was planted by the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston (CBCGB) in 1989, planted a new church called the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Nashua (CBCGN) in Nashua, New Hampshire in 2003. One can only hope that this occurs more frequently among all the churches.

¹⁵⁷ Wagner, 123.

CHAPTER 4

The CBCGB-Metrowest Church

4.1 The Planting of the Metrowest Church

The Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston (CBCGB) planted the first daughter church in the Lowell/Chelmsford area in 1989. At around the same time, CBCGB built a new church building in Lexington having a sanctuary with the capacity to seat 750 people because the congregation had outgrown the previous facility in Woburn. The decision to plant a new church *and* build a new sanctuary was deliberate after the church leadership felt that they both were needed to be done. Although the new facility in Lexington was twice as big as the previous building in Woburn, CBCGB again reached its seating capacity after about fifteen years. The idea to plant another church in order to meet the needs of the congregation was again brought up for consideration.

After evaluating a few potential locations, it was decided that the Acton-Boxborough area might be the most suitable place for planting a church. The primary reason for choosing Acton-Boxborough as the new location was that there had been a high influx of young Chinese families into the Acton-Boxborough area for the past ten years. This high influx was most observable in the formation of the Acton Chinese Language School. The School opened with over 200 children enrolled about five years ago¹⁵⁸ and it has now close to 500 students.¹⁵⁹ A second reason for choosing Acton-Boxborough as the location was that many of the CBCGB congregation lived in that area.

¹⁵⁸ Acton Chinese Language School, Journal No.1 (February 2003), <http://www.acls-ma.org/journals>, December 1, 2007.

¹⁵⁹ Acton Chinese Language School, Journal No.47 (December 2007), <http://www.acls-ma.org/journals>, December 1, 2007.

At that time, the church had one fellowship group in Acton and another one in Boxborough, each having ten to fifteen families including many seekers.

In 2004, when the leaders of CBCGB discussed the possibility of planting a church in the Acton-Boxborough area, Elder Mingche Li, an elder of the church was asked to lead this effort with the two fellowship groups forming the core of this church planting effort. Elder Li had been with the church for over thirty years, and he was heavily involved in the church during the time when CBCGL was planted in 1989. Based on that church planting experience, he proposed the following three phases of Metrowest church planting: (1) vision sharing; (2) planning; and (3) implementation.

During the vision sharing stage, Elder Li emphasized that the Christians are to bear much fruit: “This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples” (John 15:8). He also stressed the importance of the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) as the motivation of the church planting effort.

Elder Li showed the church coworkers two maps. The first map covered the greater metropolitan Boston area with a specific focus on the Acton-Boxborough area. The target location of the church plant was identified as the intersection of Route 495 and Route 111. The location fell within the town of Boxborough and was about equidistant from three existing churches: CBCGB to the east, CBCGL in the north, and the Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts in the south. This map is shown in Figure 7 with an enlargement of the target area shown in Figure 8.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ These maps were provided by Elder Mingche Li.

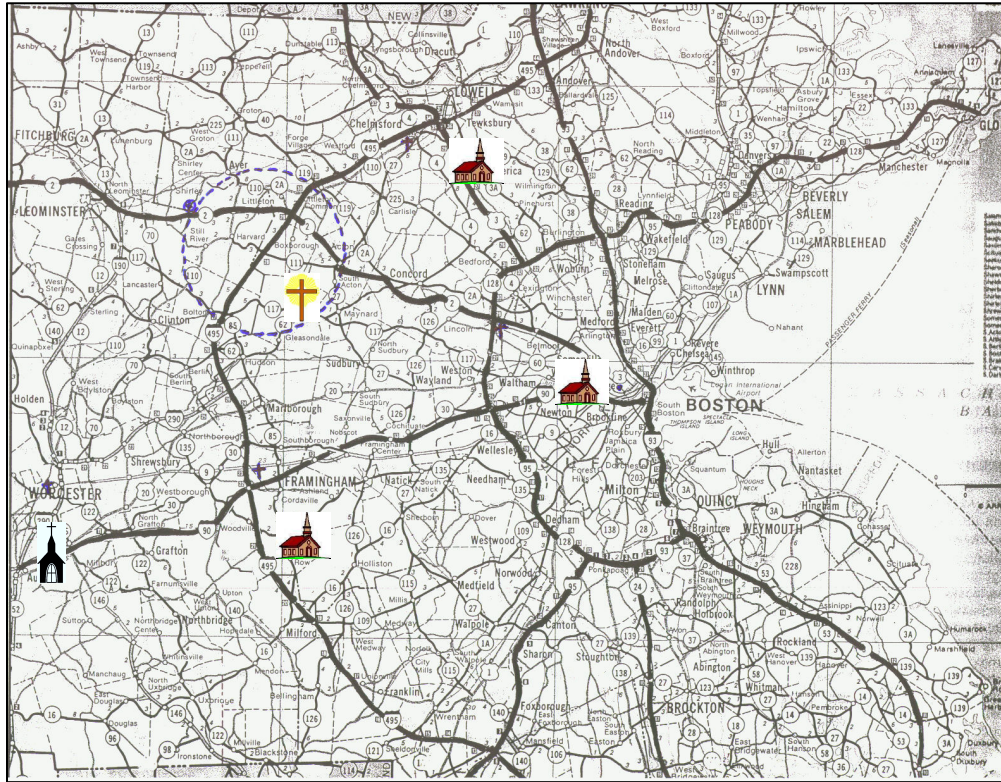


Figure 7: The Targeted Metrowest Church Plant in Boxborough

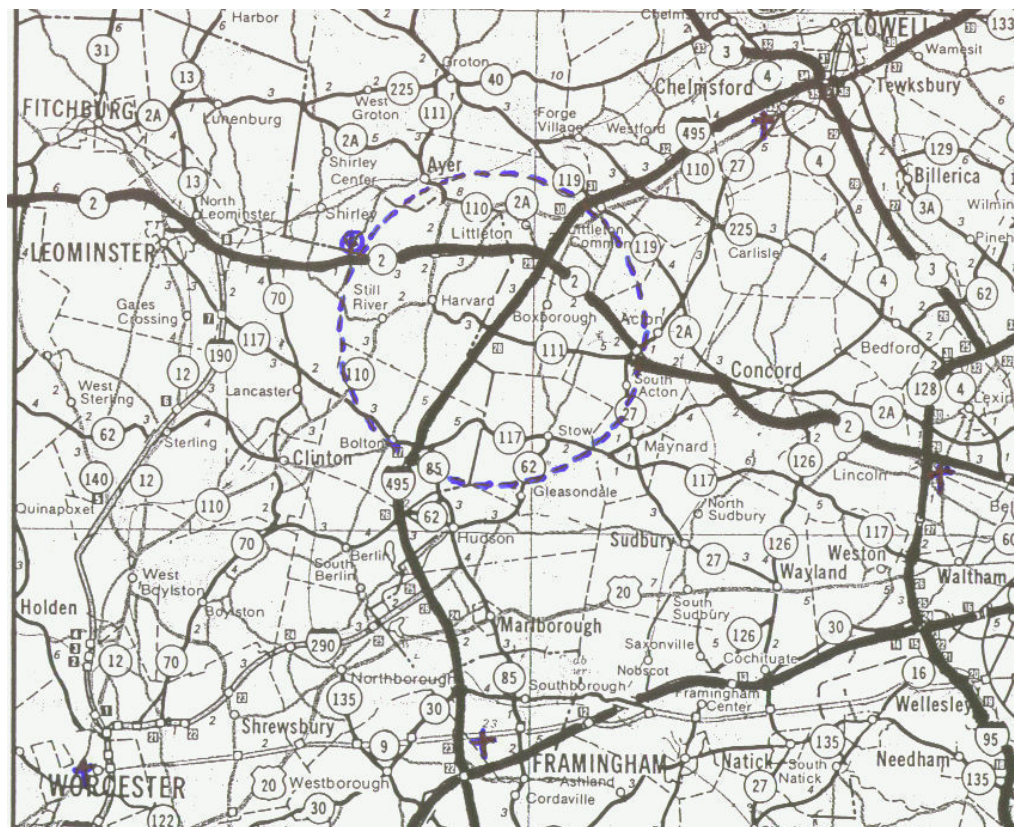


Figure 8: The Close-up View of the Targeted Metrowest Church Plant in Boxborough

At the beginning of the planning stage, the Acton and the Boxborough fellowship groups were merged to become one large group, and they rented an American church in Acton for their fellowship meetings on Friday nights. Elder Li shared with the combined fellowship group about the church's vision to plant a new church in the Acton-Boxborough area. After the meeting, the fellowship group committed themselves to this vision.

Elder Li established two major milestones as a measure of readiness for church planting. They are:

1. The number of people, including seekers, attending the Friday night Metrowest fellowship group reaching sixty; and
2. Ten coworker families who attend the Tuesday night prayer meeting in the Metrowest area.

To achieve the first goal, church members aggressively evangelized the seekers in their fellowship group. As a result, many became Christians and were eventually baptized. The fellowship group members also explored different ways to attract more seekers to come to the fellowship group. Two ideas were considered. The first idea was to start an AWANA¹⁶¹ children's program to attract more children and parents to come to the fellowship program. The second idea was to offer an ESL (English as a Second Language) class to attract adults who are interested to learn more English. After much deliberation, it was determined that there were not enough resources to begin an ESL class. However, starting the AWANA program was within grasp because many fellowship group members were eager to serve as teachers. One requirement of the AWANA program, however, was that in order for any child to join the program, one of the parents had to attend the Bible study in the fellowship group. The AWANA program

¹⁶¹ AWANA, <http://www.awana.org/>, December 1, 2007.

was a huge success, and many seekers joined the Metrowest fellowship group during that time.

To achieve the second goal, the core families were challenged to come to the weekly prayer meeting. Given the strong desire to see a new church formed in the Metrowest area, many responded to this challenge. The prayer meetings also became the spiritual driving force of the Metrowest church planting effort because many were devoted to constantly seeking the Lord's guidance through prayer.

Three committees were then established to organize and plan the church planting. The first committee was responsible for the demographic and market research in the Metrowest area. They were to obtain the demographic data of the Chinese population in the Metrowest area including addresses. Based on the data available, the committee tabulated the Chinese population of each town and it showed a similar result as described in the first chapter.

The second committee was put in charge of locating a church plant site. They explored the availability of the American churches, hotels, and public schools in the area. Several possibilities arose, but many brought challenges along with them. One possibility was a Boxborough Holiday Inn off of Route 111 near Route 495, at the very center of the targeted area. However, the hotel was not available for every Sunday. One school in the town of Harvard was available, but the location was deemed too far away. Eventually, they rented the Boxborough Holiday Inn for four months at a very reasonable price. It was hoped that this facility would attract more people to come because of the location. The sense was that once people grew accustomed to attending the new church plant, they might not object traveling about five more minutes to the school in Harvard.

The third committee was directed toward promotional and outreaching efforts. Based on the addresses received from the demographical study, invitation letters were sent to about one thousand families – some right within the targeted area and some just outside. An advertisement was also made at a special Chinese New Year cultural program of the Acton Chinese Language School. Five caring groups were formed to reach out to and care for the new seekers who had already started coming.

The vision sharing phase followed by the planning phase eventually led to the implementation phase in 2006. In March 2006, the CBCGB leadership set the date of October 1, 2006 as the inaugural service of the Metrowest church plant. In August, Pastor King-Fai Choi (the author), a full-time staff member of the church took up the responsibility of pastoring this new church for a nine-month assignment, later to be extended to fifteen months. In the six weeks leading to October 1, many meetings and training sessions took place. The Christians in Metrowest were excited for the inaugural service. They saw one another as coworkers and they worked tirelessly toward the first service. Several people from the mother church also temporarily joined and lent support to the Metrowest congregation. To keep the spirit of the coworkers in high gear and to foster participation and anticipation, a contest was conducted with a prize for the person who could best predict the average attendance of the first month.

The mother church moved up their special anniversary joint worship service between the Chinese and English congregations, usually scheduled in mid-October, to the last Sunday of September, and the new Metrowest congregation was commissioned and sent off during that time. A slide presentation was shown during the worship service highlighting the Lord's guidance in the church planting effort over the past two years.

More importantly, both the mother church and the new Metrowest congregation were eagerly anticipating how God's work would unfold in Metrowest.

4.2 The First Fifteen Months of the Metrowest Church

On Sunday morning, October 1, 2006, many coworkers came very early to the Boxborough Holiday Inn. Some posted signs outside the hotel, giving directions to people who would be coming, while others were inside, setting up the sound system in the conference room which was to be used as the sanctuary. A keyboard was lugged to the hotel by a couple who bought the instrument for the Metrowest worship service. People began arriving to church including friendly visitors from the mother church as well as other churches coming to cheer them on for the first service.

The service started at ten thirty in the morning. It was led by an experienced presider from the mother church who committed himself to come every first Sunday of each month. After an opening prayer and the singing of a few hymns and praise songs, a special choir consisting of about 15 people sang a song written by a Chinese Christian titled "This Is Love." Then, about 30 AWANA children came up and sang "Jesus Loves Me" and "Treasure Cove Song." The children remained on the raised platform, while the pastor gave a short children's story before they were dismissed to their Sunday School classes. The pastor then gave a sermon titled "A New Church – Come and Worship," and the service was concluded with Doxology and Benediction. The ushers tallied the attendance. There were 159 adults and 56 children. Most people in the Metrowest congregation were pleasantly surprised by the high turn-out though it was not clear how many people they were expecting. Unfortunately, they were able to identify 116 of the

159 adults, and it was not clear how many of the newcomers (those who had not been coming to the Metrowest fellowship group) were potential new congregants and how many were well-wishers.

All the newcomers were given a brochure of the Metrowest church and invited to leave their contact information. The welcoming coworkers entered the information into the computer and every newcomer received a welcome letter from the pastor and a phone call from the coworkers. During the prayer meeting on Tuesday, about 20 people came. They shared what they experienced on Sunday, and praised God for the mighty work that he did in their midst. The mood was exuberant, and their spirits were high.

After the first service, the Sunday attendance dropped significantly to the eighties, which would become the baseline from which the Metrowest church would build upon. In the Chinese congregation of the mother church, the average Sunday attendance experienced a drop of about 40 people from 565 people in quarter three of 2006 to 527 people in quarter four of the same year. The attendance climbed back up to 563 people in quarter three of 2007, approximately the same level as before the Metrowest congregation was sent off. So, there was a net gain of about 40 people in both the mother church and the daughter church combined shortly after the Metrowest church was planted, and a gain of 80 people a year later.

The new worship service also brought new people to the Friday night's fellowship program. The attendance increased by 25 percent to about 75 adults. (The mother church did not keep track of the attendance in the fellowship groups, but there was no noticeable attendance drop reported). The number of groups was increased to six groups from four groups previously. Some of these groups were modeled after the Sunday

School classes of the mother church. There was one class for seekers and another one for people who interested in baptism. Seven students joined the 12-week baptism class. Four were baptized at the end of the class in December 2006; one was baptized four months after that; and another one a year later.

Along with the increase adult attendance in the fellowship group, the children's ministry also flourished. There was a slight increase of attendance to 55 children in the AWANA program, and growth looked very promising. In addition, about ten or so children, from middle school to high school-aged, began attending the church. In November 2006, a couple from the English ministry of the mother church agreed to help with the establishment of a youth group. There were about a dozen junior high students joined the new youth group, and they began meeting weekly on Friday nights.

The Metrowest congregation continued the weekly prayer meetings on Tuesday evenings and they were held in the homes of various members. Each week, someone would lead a praise time, followed by corporate prayer. Then, members would divide into small groups to read and study one chapter of the book *Better Together – Forty Days of Community* written by Rick Warren. This book was chosen with the hope that the core members would form a strong community which would be instrumental for effective ministry, and most people who came to the prayer meeting have no problem understanding English except for couple of elderly people. The small groups would then have a time of sharing and prayer.

In the middle of November 2006, Pastor Choi presented a proposal to the mother church leadership regarding the establishment of the Metrowest charter membership. The charter members would elect among themselves seven people to form an executive

council to take care of many of the day-to-day operations of the Metrowest church. The roles of the executive council members were similar to the deacons in the mother church, but the title of deacons was not used due to different election mechanism. Pastor Choi received input from the Metrowest coworkers for this proposal, and a revised proposal (shown in Appendix A) was subsequently endorsed by the mother church leadership.

In December 2006, seventy-five people joined as charter members and seven people were elected as executive council members on the last day of 2006. The Metrowest operation was divided up into various ministries including worship, spiritual formation, fellowship, children ministry, evangelism, etc. with one executive member responsible for each ministry. At the beginning of 2007, Pastor Choi led a series of training for the newly elected executive council members. They met every other Monday evening for six months studying the book *Spiritual Leadership* written by Oswald Sanders. The goal for this training was to build up the character and understanding of the executive council members about servant leadership.

The Metrowest congregation slowly became stabilized by the end of 2006. A demographic analysis of the congregation indicated that the majority (60%) of the people lived in Acton, 15% lived in Boxborough, and the remaining lived in various towns mostly east of Boxborough. Given that the Boxborough Holiday Inn is located in the west edge of Boxborough, this implied that about 90% of the Metrowest congregation had to travel west to come to the worship service.

Shortly after the beginning of 2007, the Metrowest church moved the meeting location to the High School in the town of Harvard to the west because the Boxborough Holiday Inn was not available on every Sunday. The Harvard High School facility was

better than the Boxborough Holiday Inn because the Metrowest church had exclusive use of the facility on Sundays.

This new location was much more convenient for the 10% who had to travel east to come to the church. However, for the majority who lived on the east side, many indicated that the new location was too far, even though the school was only a five minute drive from the Boxborough Holiday Inn. For some who lived in Acton, the driving time to the Harvard High School was comparable to that of the distance it had been to attend the mother church. Perhaps because of this, during the transition to Harvard High School, some families returned to the mother church, and the attendance of some seekers also gradually became more sporadic. It was felt by many that the Metrowest church needed to move back eastward to where the majority of the Chinese population was in order to reach them.

With the help from an American church in Acton, the Metrowest church started a dialogue with the superintendent of the Acton School District. Eventually, the superintendent made arrangement for the Metrowest church to use the Gates Elementary School on the west side of Acton. The location was right in the center of the Metrowest congregation and it was close to the targeted Chinese population in Acton. The facility was better than the Harvard High School in some measure but worse in others. The move eventually took place at the end of August 2007.

After the move to the Gates Elementary School in Acton, the worship attendance increased noticeably. This explains the big increase in attendance between quarter 3 and quarter 4 of 2007 as shown in Figure 9 which portrays the median worship attendance of each quarter (the median was used instead of the mean to reduce the impact of special

occasions when the attendance was very high or very low). In the fourth quarter (October-December) of 2007, the average (median) weekly attendance was 89, 22, and 33 for adults, youth, and children respectively. This gives an average total of 145 people which was a 15% increase compared with the third quarter of 2007, and a 9% increase compared with the fourth quarter of 2006.

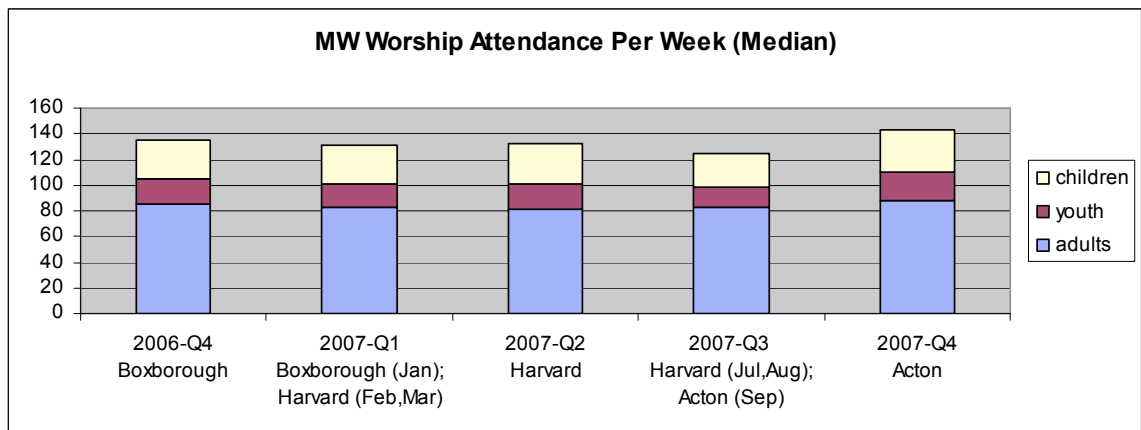


Figure 9: Worship Attendance of the Metrowest Church

There was another advantage in this move besides location. Since the Acton School District considered the Metrowest church's usage as community service, they only charged a nominal fee which was much lower than the Harvard High School. As a result, the Metrowest church was able to afford renting more rooms to launch the adult Sunday School classes on Sundays starting in September 2007.

There were five classes offered and attendance was about 75% of those who attended the worship service. The number of children who stayed behind for the children's Sunday School was over 90% of those that attended the children's worship service. This was an exceedingly high percentage, but it was unclear if it could be sustained. After four months, however, both the adult and children Sunday School

attendance remained at that level. This was probably due to the enthusiasm and the strong sense of community of the Metrowest congregation.

As the Metrowest congregation grew, people began feeling that the relationships among the members were not as close as before. Although this was to be expected for a growing congregation, it was an issue that needed to be addressed. The caring groups that were set up to build up more intimate relationship were not functioning as well as desired since it was difficult for members to find additional time to meet besides Sunday mornings and Friday nights. Fortunately, with the move of the adult Sunday School program from Friday nights to Sunday mornings, the caring groups were transformed to fellowship groups in September 2007.

With the help from other coworkers, Pastor Choi led a series of training for the fellowship group leaders based on the book *How to Lead Small Groups* written by Neal McBride, and conducted pre-studies for the Bible study leaders. On Friday nights, group members met together to study the Bible or watch a video series on family issues, followed by group discussions. As a result, many reported that the relationships among members within each group were slowly but surely beginning to improve.

Financially, the Metrowest congregation was covered fully by the mother church; all offerings went to the mother church and all expenses were provided by the mother church. Figure 10 shows the average weekly offerings of the Metrowest Church. In the fourth quarter (October-December) of 2007, the average (mean) weekly offering was \$2,449, \$652, and \$137 for general, missions, and special offerings respectively. This gives an average total of \$3,238 which was a 31% increase compared with the third quarter of 2007, and a 23% increase compared with the fourth quarter of 2006.

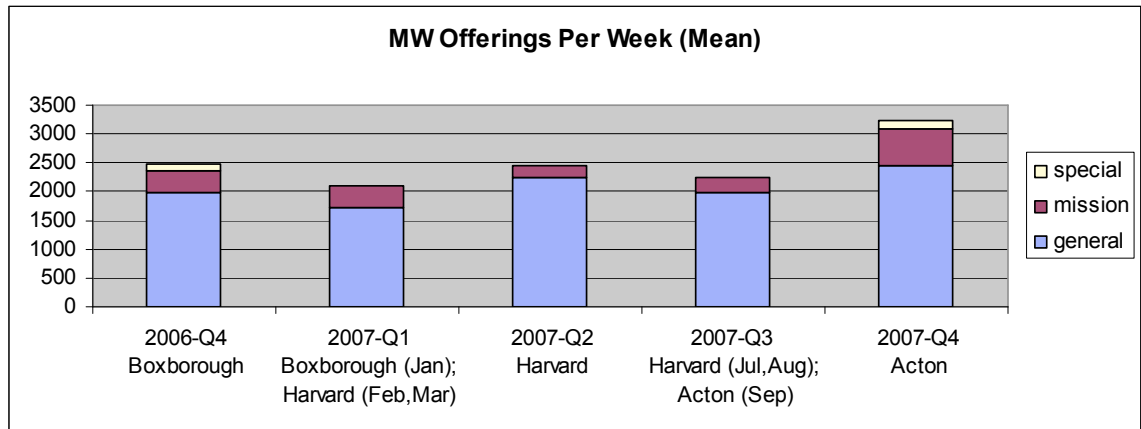


Figure 10: Weekly Offerings of the Metrowest Church

The mother church and the Metrowest congregation had discussed the time table for the Metrowest congregation to become independent. A target date of two years was tentatively set , implying that the Metrowest congregation could become independent as soon as October 2008. The Metrowest executive council took this challenge seriously. In October 2007, they identified five quantitative milestones for the readiness of independence. These five milestones are shown below with the fourth quarter 2007 result in parenthesis:

1. Sunday worship attendance exceeds 100 people (89%)
2. Sunday school attendance exceeds 75% of worship attendance (99%)
3. Offering exceeds \$130,000 annually (90%)
4. Offering towards missions exceeds 10% of regular offering (266%)
5. Prayer meeting attendance exceeds 20 people (75%)

Based on the statistics of the fourth quarter in 2007, the Metrowest congregation had made good progress toward these milestones. In addition to the above quantitative milestones, the executive council also recognized certain qualitative criteria. One requirement was spiritual readiness. This included the spirituality of the Metrowest coworkers and members. Other criteria mentioned included finding a suitable full-time

pastor and procurement of a permanent church facility. It was recognized, however, that the timings of these two events were much less predictable.

The plan of the mother church included the return of Pastor Choi in January 2008 and Elder Li in October 2008. Therefore, a pastoral search committee was formed early on to find a full-time pastor for the Metrowest congregation. After months of searching, the committee found one pastor that they invited to visit. He came for an interview in June 2007 but eventually turned down the invitation. Finding a pastor would be highly strategic for the future growth of the Metrowest church. The Metrowest congregation was also in need a youth/children pastor. However, given the financial consideration, they could at most afford to have a seminarian or a part-time staff. In reality, the finding of a suitable youth pastor is even more difficult than finding a suitable adult pastor.

Next to the pastoral search, the Metrowest congregation was also actively looking to procure permanent property. However, given the requirements of location, size, and price, nothing suitable arose. So the effort continued. Some of the Metrowest congregation had expressed that having a permanent location would be an important factor for becoming independent, though this appeared to be a minority view.

4.3 A Survey on the Metrowest Church Planting

In December 2007, a survey was conducted among the Metrowest congregation to evaluate the church planting effort. The survey was designed based on the findings of Chapter 3. An initial draft of the survey was reviewed by five people, including two likely participants of the survey. Many valuable inputs were received and the survey was revised accordingly. The revised survey (see Appendix B) was sent out to all the charter

members and about thirty other non-members who had come to the Metrowest worship service recently. Given that not everyone had email access, it was estimated that about 100 people actually received the survey, and among them, twenty-five people completed the survey. This provides an adequate sample (25%) of the Metrowest congregation (about 100 people), and the results may be considered as good indications of that of the Metrowest congregation as a whole.

Given that the survey was conducted through email, the identity of the participants might be exposed which could introduce some bias in the result. This potential bias might be worsened given that survey was conducted by one of the church planters and there were questions that pertained to the church planters. This situation was somewhat corrected later through a subsequent email in urging the participants to send their completed survey to another person who forward the surveys collectively (and anonymously) to the one who conducted the survey.

Nonetheless, it appeared that anonymity was not much of an issue in the mind of the participants given that six of the twelve participants who emailed their completed survey directly to the conductor did so after the subsequent “urging” email. A separate analysis was done by dividing the participants into two groups. The first group consists of the surveys that were sent directly to the conductor, and the second group consists of those sent to the “middleman.” The results of the two groups turned out to be very similar. The similarity between the two groups might be due to the small sample size of 25 people. Nonetheless, if dissimilarity were observed, an analysis might be needed for each of the groups and their results compared. Given the similarity, only the analysis of

the combined group will be discussed. In hindsight, however, perhaps a web-based survey may be a better choice to put aside another potential bias due to anonymity.

The survey consisted of ten sections, and the results were analyzed according to these sections:

- A. Background Information
- B. General questions about Metrowest church planting
- C. Location and facility of the Metrowest church (MW)
- D. Metrowest church planters (elder & pastor)
- E. Metrowest executive council members (2007 or 2008)
- F. Other Metrowest coworkers
- G. Metrowest Ministries
- H. Your involvement and feeling about the Metrowest church
- I. Your parents' feeling about the Metrowest church
- J. Your children's feeling about the Metrowest church
- K. Any other comments about the Metrowest church

The results will be discussed according to each section. Given the number of questions involved, not every question will be discussed given the scope of this thesis-project. However, key questions and the questions that exposed interesting responses will be examined.

4.3.1 Background Information of the Survey Participants

In Section A, the focus was on the background information of the people completing the survey. The first question was their gender. As shown in Figure 11, there were fourteen (14) men and eleven (11) women. This gives a male percentage of 56% as compared with the estimated 45% in the Metrowest congregation. This difference in the sampling may introduce a small, but hopefully insignificant bias in the analysis.

Question 2 was about age. Figure 12 shows the age distribution with half of the people in the 31-40 age group. The distribution is a good representation of the Metrowest

congregation except that the elderly were not well represented. The lower participation of the survey among the elderly was somewhat expected since many did not have email access. To obtain some reasonable feedback from the elderly, Section I of the survey asked the participants to gather input from their parents (if their parents attended the Metrowest church), and several participants provided such input. In like manner, Section J asked the participants to gather input from their children. Since both husband and wife may fill in a survey form, in order to avoid double counting, the survey instruction stated that: *If your spouse also participates in this survey, decide on which one of you will complete this section on your children's feeling about the Metrowest church.*

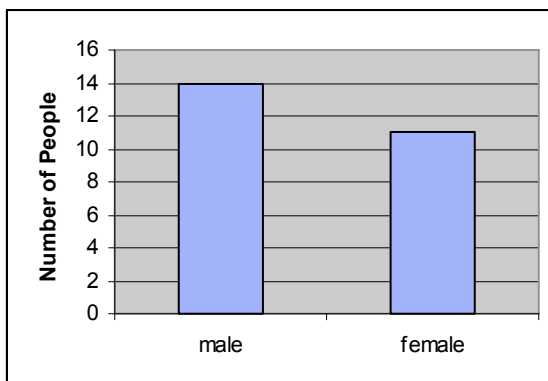


Figure 11: Question A1 - Gender

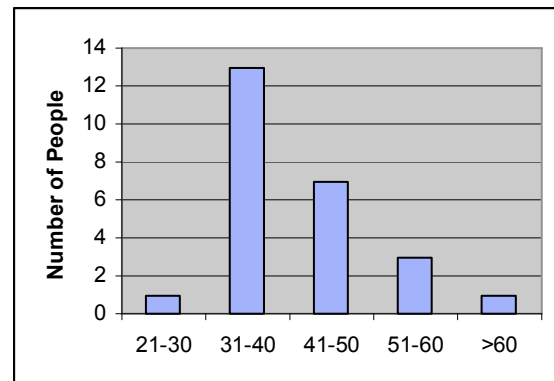


Figure 12: Question A2 - Age

Question 3 asked how long the participants had been with Metrowest church or the fellowship prior to the formation of the church and Question 4 asked how long the participants had been following Christ. Unfortunately, there was a typo in the first two choices in both questions that escaped the survey designer and the five reviewers. The choices were meant to read *After October 1, 2006* and *Before October 1, 2006, but less than 3 years* but instead appeared as *After October 1, 2007* and *Before October 1, 2007,*

but less than 3 years. The date *October 1, 2006* was more significant because that was when the Metrowest church was established.

The fact that there six people picked choice one in Question 3 might indicate that most participants also overlooked the typo and answered according to the intended meaning. In Figures 13 and 14, the intended meaning was portrayed, but one should keep this error in mind. If the first two choices were combined together, Figure 13 indicates that 64% (16 out of 25) of the participants became associated with the Metrowest congregation only within the past three years. On the other hand, Figure 14 shows that 72% (18 out of 25) had been Christians for over five years. It should be noted that two (2) non-Christians participated in the survey.

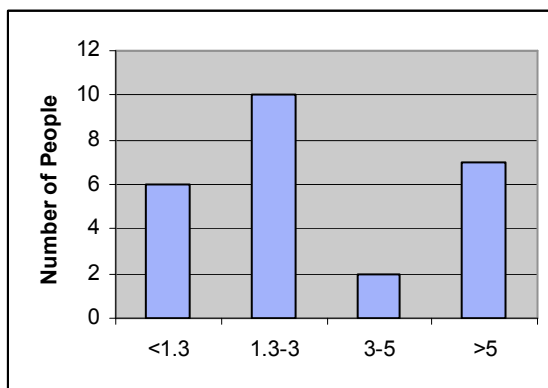


Figure 13: Question A3 – Years with MW

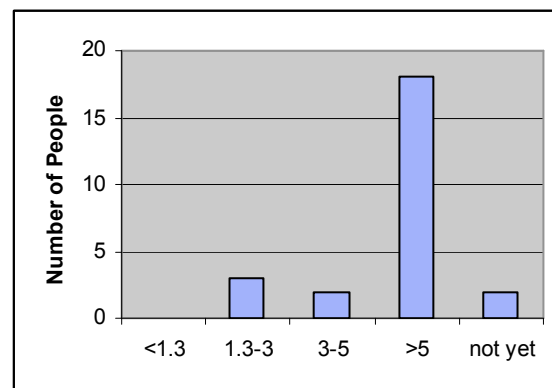


Figure 14: Question A4 - Years as Christian

Question 5 asked if the participants were Metrowest church charter members, and Question 6 asked if they were involved in serving. Figure 15 indicates that 88% (22 out of 25) of the participants were charter members. Given that there were two non-Christians participated in the survey, all except one Christian was not yet a charter member of the Metrowest congregation. Figure 16 shows that 84% (21 out of 25) were serving in the Metrowest church. This implies 91% (21 out of 23) of the Christians were

involved in serving. The percentage of the Metrowest congregation involved in serving might be slightly lower, but would likely be in the 80% range. This high percentage of involvement reflects the advantage of church planting as discussed in the previous chapter.

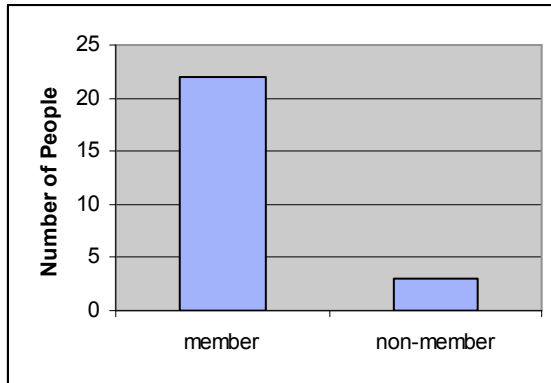


Figure 15: Question A5 – MW Charter Member

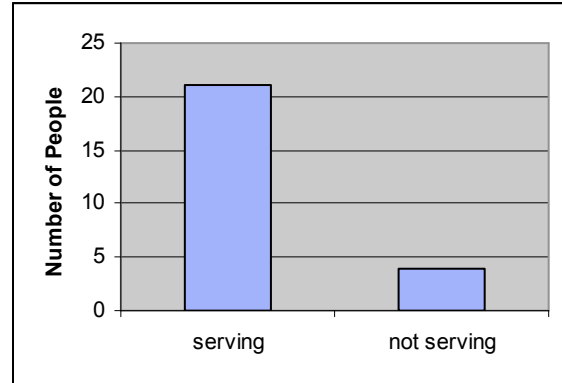


Figure 16: Question A6 – Serving in MW

Question 7 asked the areas of ministry the participants were serving. Figure 17 shows the distribution and the major areas of ministry were evenly covered. For the others areas of ministry specified, they include evangelism (1), lunch (2), and AWANA (1). The one serving in AWANA should be considered as part of youth / children ministry.

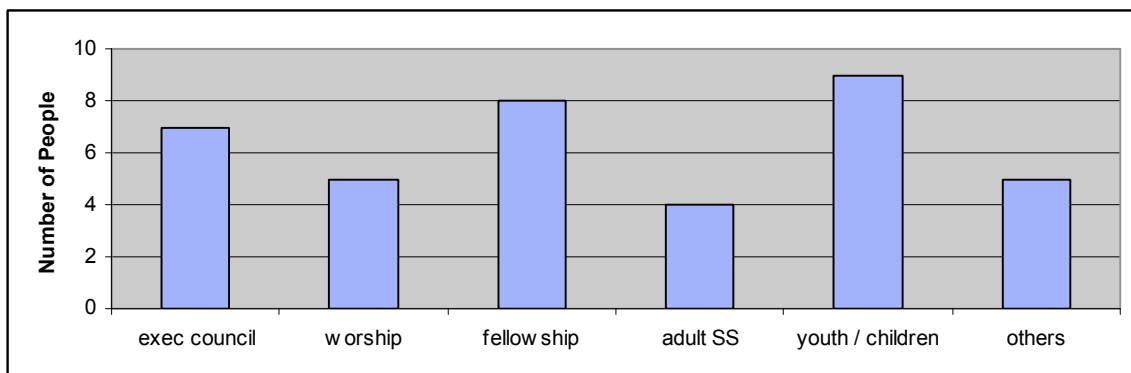


Figure 17: Question A7 – Area of Service

4.3.2 General Perception about the Metrowest Church Planting

In Section B, the focus was on the participants' general perception about the Metrowest church planting. In Questions 1-8 and 10-11, the participants were asked how much they agree with each statement. The choices were in the range of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and five indicating *strongly agree*. For Question 9, the participants were asked about the timing for the planting of the Metrowest church and the choices were in the range of 1 to 3 with 1 indicating *too soon* and 3 indicating *too late*. The twelve questions in this section are listed below and the results were shown in Figure 18.

1. I understand the vision for planting the MW church.
2. The planting of a Chinese church in the MW area is needed.
3. The MW area can support a Chinese church.
4. The planting of the MW church was well-planned.
5. The planting of the MW church was well-executed.
6. The MW church receives a lot of support from CBCGB.
7. Many people prayed a lot for the planting of the MW church.
8. I prayed a lot for the planting of the MW church.
9. The timing for planting the MW church was (1=Too soon; 2=Just right; 3=Too late)
10. I think MW has made a lot of progress in October 2006.
11. I think MW has the potential to grow.
12. Any other comments about the MW church planting:

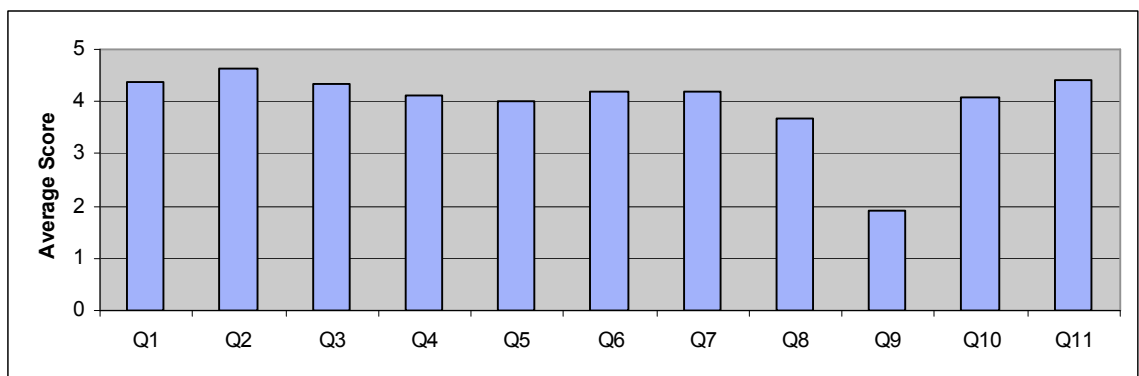


Figure 18: Section B – General Questions on MW Church Planting

It should be noted that the average response of each question (except Question 9) hovers around 4. This implies that the participants generally agree with all the statements. Question 2 which reads *the planting of a Chinese church in the Metrowest area is needed* received the highest score of 4.6. This indicates that the participants identified very well with the need to plant the Metrowest church – it is not just in the mind of the leadership of the mother church. On the other end, Question 8 which reads *I prayed a lot for the planting of the MW church* received the lowest score of 3.7. However, Question 7 which reads *many people prayed a lot for the planting of the Metrowest church* received a score of 4.2. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that the two non-Christians who participated in the survey gave very low scores to Question 8. Upon checking the individual responses, it was found that the two non-Christians gave the responses of 3 and 5 for this question, thus ruling out this explanation. Perhaps the participants perceived others to pray more but the reality was different from the perception. Or perhaps they themselves did not pray a lot, but others (including people at CBCGB, and other leaders who may not have taken the survey) actually did pray a lot. Another interpretation is that the participants were more self-conscious and gave lower individual scores to Question 8.

For Question 9, the average score is 1.9 which indicates that the participants felt that the timing for planting the Metrowest church was just right. Question 12 asks the participants to give *any other comments about the MW church planting*. Two responses were received:

1. There is still a lot to be learned and to be done

2. There is a Chinese school over there, where a lot of potential Christian can be found, but somehow the Chinese school is so good that some of the people there think going to church is duplicated [sic] things.

Both comments show that there is still much more to be done. The second comment indicates that to some non-Christians, church-going is a cultural thing and the Chinese School has pretty much fulfilled that need. This will be discussed in more details in the next chapter.

4.3.3 *The Location and Facility*

In Section C, the focus is on the location and facility of the Metrowest church. The Metrowest church has used three different facilities in three different towns. Question 1 asked the participants to rate the suitability of the three towns. As shown in Figure 19, the town of *Acton* was rated the highest (4.4) with *Boxborough* a close second (4.2), and the town of *Harvard* was deemed as the least suitable (3.2). Question 2 which reads *where do you think is the most suitable location (please specify)*. Four (4) people named “Acton,” three (3) named “Boxborough,” and one (1) named “Littleton” which is a little north of Acton. Three others did not name specific town: one said “somewhere between or in” (presumably the three towns named in Question 1), one said “further west,” and one said “outside (west) of Route 495.” The last two probably indicate the intention to reach out to the Chinese population further west where there is no Chinese church. The location preference will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Question 3 asked the participants to rate the suitability of the three facilities. As shown in Figure 20, the *middle school facility* at the Harvard High School was rated the highest (4.0) with the *elementary school* in Acton a close second (3.7), and the *hotel* in Boxborough was deemed as the least suitable (2.9). Question 4 which reads *where do*

you think is the most suitable facility (please specify). Four (4) people indicated “renting a church;” three (3) indicated “having a permanent church;” one (1) mentioned “high school;” one (1) mentioned “middle school;” and one (1) just indicated a location of “outside (west) of Route 495.” This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

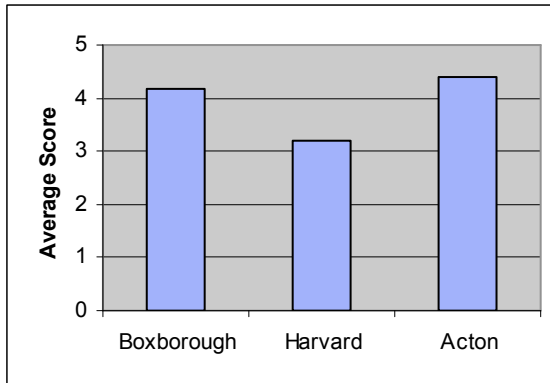


Figure 19: Question C1 – Location Preference

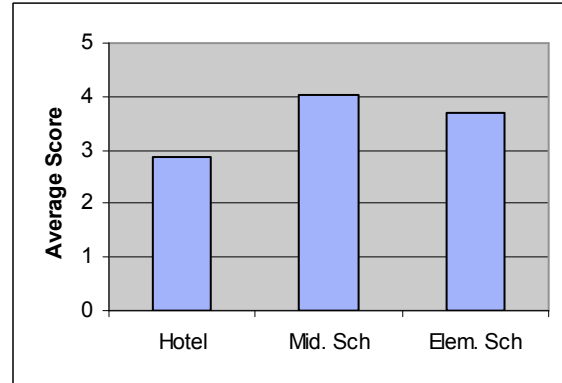


Figure 20: Question C3 – Facility Preference

In Questions 5-9, the participants were asked how much they agree with each statement. The choices were in the range of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and five indicating *strongly agree*. The questions are:

5. MW moves too frequently
6. The MW’s moves are unavoidable.
7. MW should move to a permanent facility as soon as possible
8. MW should own a permanent facility as soon as possible.
9. MW can afford to own a permanent facility.

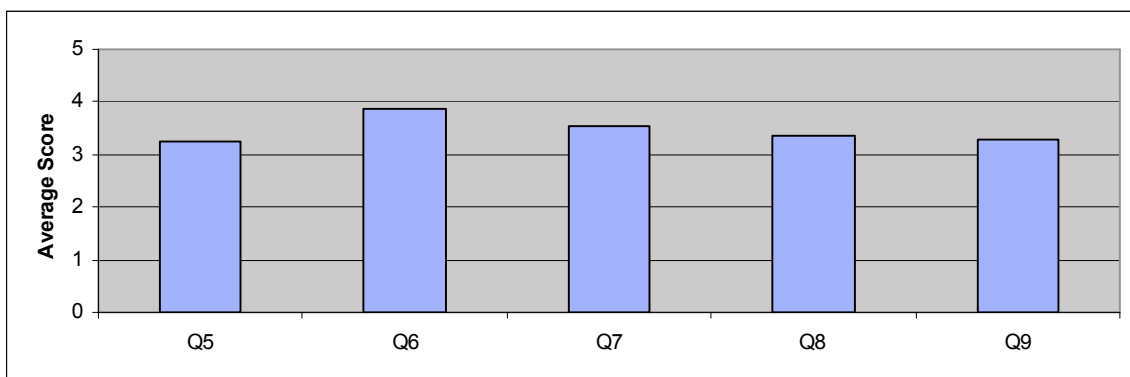


Figure 21: Questions C5-C9 – MW Location & Facility

The result of Questions 5-9 are shown in Figure 21. The overall response is between 3 to 4 which is about 0.5 point lower than the overall response to questions in Section B. Question 6 which reads *the Metrowest's moves are unavoidable* has the highest score (3.9) while Question 5 which reads *Metrowest moves too frequently* has the lowest score (3.2). This reflects that the Metrowest congregation did feel that the moves were more frequent than they preferred, but they also showed understanding and appreciation about the reasons for such moves. It should be noted that Question 9 which reads *Metrowest can afford to own a permanent facility* also received a rather low score (3.3) but the score is still above the neutral point. This may indicate that the Metrowest congregation was cautiously optimistic about the potential of raising financial support for having their own facility. This is a good sign given that the Metrowest church has been in existence for just 15 months.

In Question 10, the participants were asked to give *any other comments about the MW location and facility*. Three comments were received. One expressed “I don't think the location matters;” a second one reiterated “having our own facility;” and a last one mentioned that “need more prayer to understand God's will.” These comments about location will be discussed further in the next chapter.

4.3.4 The Church Planters

In Section D, the focus is on the church planters. For Questions 1-19, the choices were in the range of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and five indicating *strongly agree*. The questions are:

1. They demonstrate passion for God.
2. They demonstrate passion for people.
3. They demonstrate good spiritual character
4. They demonstrate spiritual leadership.
5. They demonstrate accountability.
6. They have a clear vision in church planting.
7. They communicate well on the vision.
8. They communicate well on the status of the church.
9. They have spiritual gifts for church planting.
10. They complement each other.
11. They demonstrate good teamwork.
12. They inspire people to serve.
13. They encourage people to serve.
14. They challenge people to serve.
15. They set examples for people to serve.
16. They set standards for people to serve.
17. They appreciate people who serve.
18. They take time to nurture people who serve.
19. They care for the people in the church.

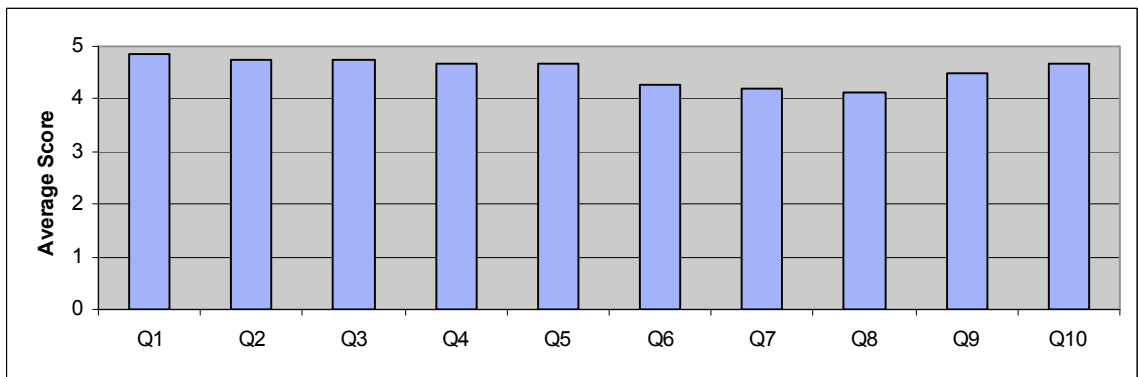


Figure 22: Section D – MW Church Planters Part 1

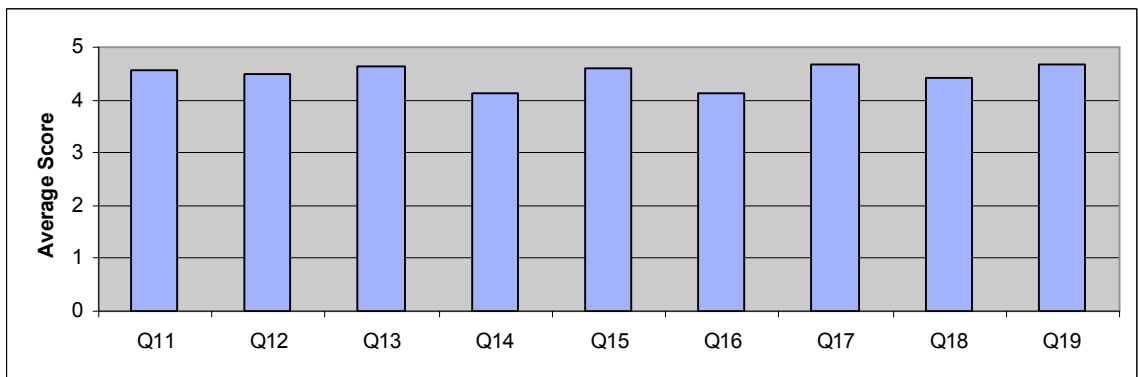


Figure 23: Section D – MW Church Planters Part 2

The results are shown in Figures 22 and 23. It should be noted that the average responses for these questions fall in the range of 4.1 to 4.8. On the higher scoring end, three questions (1, 2, and 3) received an average score of 4.8, and five questions (4, 5, 10, 17, and 19) received 4.7. These higher scoring qualities are:

1. They demonstrate passion for God.
2. They demonstrate passion for people.
3. They demonstrate good spiritual character
4. They demonstrate spiritual leadership.
5. They demonstrate accountability.
10. They complement each other.
17. They appreciate people who serve.
19. They care for the people in the church.

On the lower scoring end, three questions (8, 14, and 16) received 4.1 and one question (7) received 4.2. These higher scoring qualities are:

7. They communicate well on the vision.
8. They communicate well on the status of the church.
14. They challenge people to serve.
16. They set standards for people to serve.

These lower scoring questions offered improvement opportunities for the church planters and they will be further discussed in the next chapter. In Question 20, the participants were asked to give *any other comments about the MW church planters*. Only one comment which said “best team” was received.

4.3.5 The Executive Council Members

In Section E, the focus is on the executive council members. For Questions 1-19, the choices were in the range of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and five indicating *strongly agree*. The questions are:

1. They demonstrate passion for God.
2. They demonstrate passion for people.
3. They demonstrate good spiritual character.

4. They demonstrate spiritual leadership.
5. They demonstrate accountability.
6. They complement each other.
7. They demonstrate good teamwork.
8. They inspire people to serve.
9. They encourage people to serve.
10. They challenge people to serve.
11. They set examples for people to serve.
12. They set standards for people to serve.
13. They appreciate people who serve.
14. They take time to nurture people who serve.
15. They know the people in the church.
16. They care for the people in the church.
17. They are faithful.
18. They are available.
19. They are teachable.

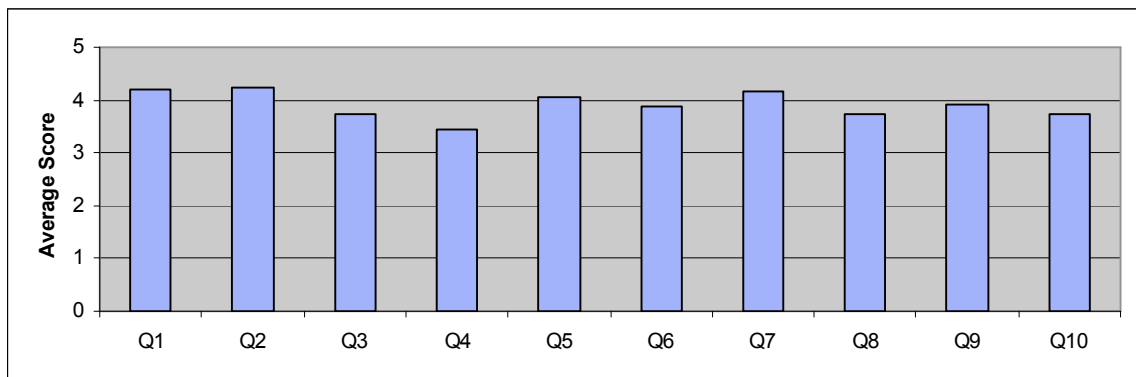


Figure 24: Section E – MW Executive Council Members Part 1

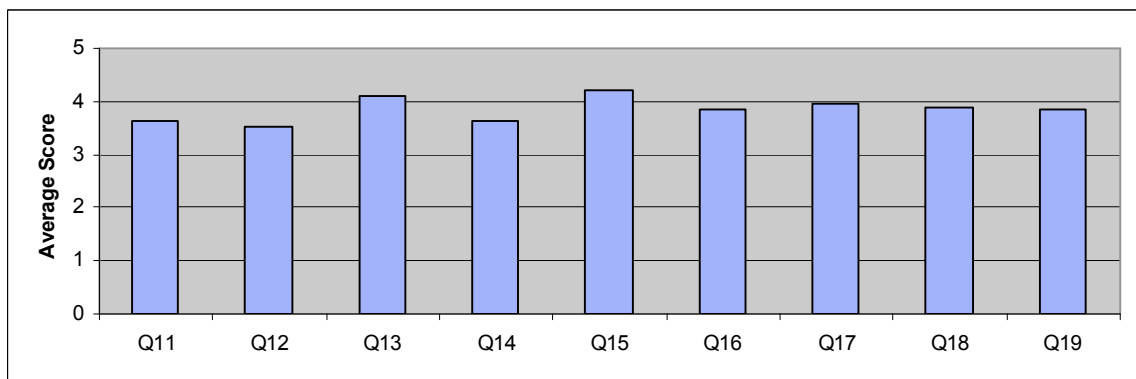


Figure 25: Section E – MW Executive Council Members Part 2

The results are shown in Figures 24 and 25. It should be noted that the average responses for these questions fall in the range of 3.5 to 4.3. This is about 0.5 points lower

than those of the church planters (4.1 to 4.8). On the higher scoring end, one question (2) received an average score of 4.3, and three questions (1, 7, and 15) received 4.2. These higher scoring qualities are:

1. They demonstrate passion for God.
2. They demonstrate passion for people.
7. They demonstrate good teamwork.
15. They know the people in the church.

On the lower scoring end, two questions (4 and 12) received 3.5 and two questions (11 and 14) received 3.6. These lower scoring qualities are:

4. They demonstrate spiritual leadership
11. They set examples for people to serve.
12. They set standards for people to serve.
14. They take time to nurture people who serve.

Two of the lower scoring qualities (11 and 12) are the same as those of the church planters. For Question 4, perhaps the executive council members were measured against the yardstick of the church planters. For Question 14, perhaps they were themselves more engaged in serving rather than in nurturing others to serve. A more systematic and thorough cross-sectional analysis among the church planters, the executive council members and the other coworkers will be discussed in a later section.

In Question 20, the participants were asked to give *any other comments about the Metrowest executive council members*. Two comments were received. The first comment said that “all individual are different; it is hard to give a general ranking.” This is obviously true, unless the objective of the survey was to evaluate individuals. However, this comment may indicate that the executive council members are perceived differently with respect to the qualities addressed in these questions. The second comment said that “I think council members still need to grow up in group

communication.” It is not clear what *group communication* is referring to. Perhaps it refers to *communication among executive council members*. Upon checking the individual form, it was found that the person who made that comment was himself/herself an executive council member. This, somewhat contradicts the relatively high score in Question 7 which reads *they demonstrate good teamwork*. This perhaps indicates that the reality about good teamwork and communication among the executive council members may be different from the external perception.

4.3.6 The Other Coworkers

In Section F, the focus is on the other coworkers. For Questions 1-9, the choices were in the range of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and five indicating *strongly agree*. The questions are:

1. They demonstrate passion for God.
2. They demonstrate passion for people.
3. They demonstrate good spiritual character.
4. They demonstrate accountability.
5. They know the people in the church.
6. They care for the people in the church.
7. They are faithful.
8. They are available.
9. They are teachable.

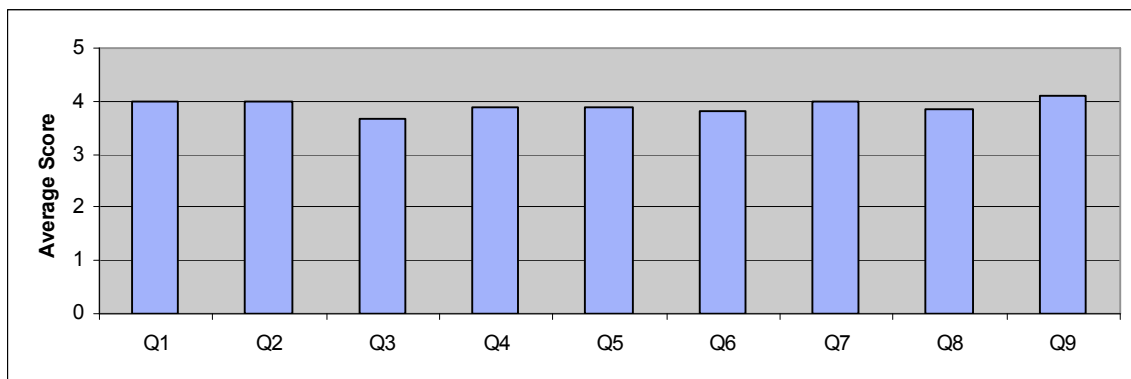


Figure 26: Section F – MW Coworkers

The results are shown in Figure 26. It should be noted that the average responses for these questions fall in the range of 3.7 to 4.1. This is about 0.5 points lower than those of the church planters (4.1 to 4.8), but comparable to that of the executive council members (3.5 to 4.3). On the higher scoring end, one question (9) received an average score of 4.1, and three questions (1, 2, and 7) received 4.0. These higher scoring qualities are:

1. They demonstrate passion for God.
2. They demonstrate passion for people.
7. They are faithful.
9. They are teachable.

On the lower scoring end, one questions (3) received 3.7 and one question (6) received 3.8. These lower scoring qualities are:

3. They demonstrate good spiritual character.
6. They care for the people in the church.

These two lower scoring qualities are similar to those of the executive council members.

In Question 10, the participants were asked to give *any other comments about the other Metrowest coworkers*. One comment which said “all individual are different; it is hard to give a general ranking was received” was received. Upon checking, it was the same participant who made the same comment about the executive council members.

4.3.7 A Cross-sectional Analysis of the Metrowest Coworkers

The questions in Sections D-F pertain to the three groups of coworkers: the church planters, the executive council members, and the coworkers at large. Some of the questions were exactly the same for all three groups, while several others are common to two of the three groups. A cross-sectional analysis reveals the similarities and difference

among the three groups. The questions in common among all three groups are listed as follows:

1. They demonstrate passion for God. (D1, E1, F1)
2. They demonstrate passion for people. (D2, E2, F2)
3. They demonstrate good spiritual character. (D3, E3, F3)
4. They demonstrate accountability. (D5, E5, F4)
5. They care for the people in the church. (D19, E16, F6)

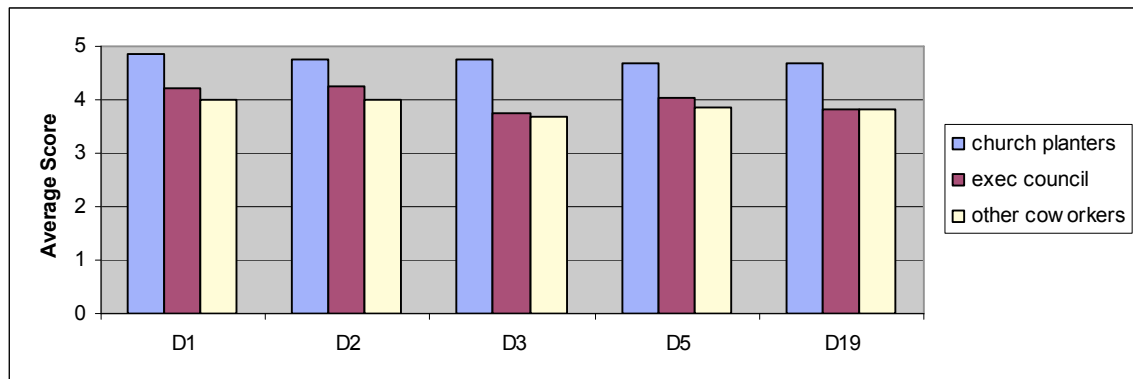


Figure 27: Comparison of Church Planters, Executive Council Members, and Other Coworkers

Figure 27 shows how the survey participants view these three groups of coworkers with respect to these five qualities. The average scores for these five questions are: 4.7, 4.0, and 3.9 for the church planters, the executive council members, and the other coworkers respectively.

The questions in common between the church planters and the executive council members are listed as follows:

1. They demonstrate spiritual leadership. (D4, E4)
2. They complement each other. (D10, E6)
3. They demonstrate good teamwork. (D11, E7)
4. They inspire people to serve. (D12, E8)
5. They encourage people to serve. (D13, E9)
6. They challenge people to serve. (D14, E10)
7. They set examples for people to serve. (D15, E11)
8. They set standards for people to serve. (D16, E12)
9. They appreciate people who serve. (D17, E13)
10. They take time to nurture people who serve. (D18, E14)

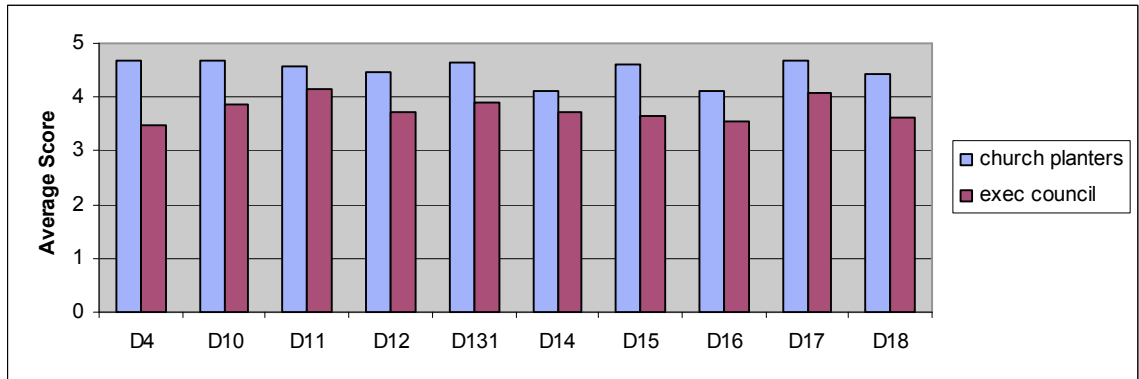


Figure 28: Comparison of Church Planters and Executive Council Members

Figure 28 shows how the survey participants view these two groups of coworkers with respect to these ten qualities. The average scores for these ten questions are: 4.5 and 3.8 for the church planters and the executive council members respectively.

The questions in common between the executive council members and the other coworkers are listed as follows:

1. They know the people in the church (E15, F5)
2. They are faithful (E17, F7)
3. They are available.(E18, F8)
4. They are teachable.(E19, F9)

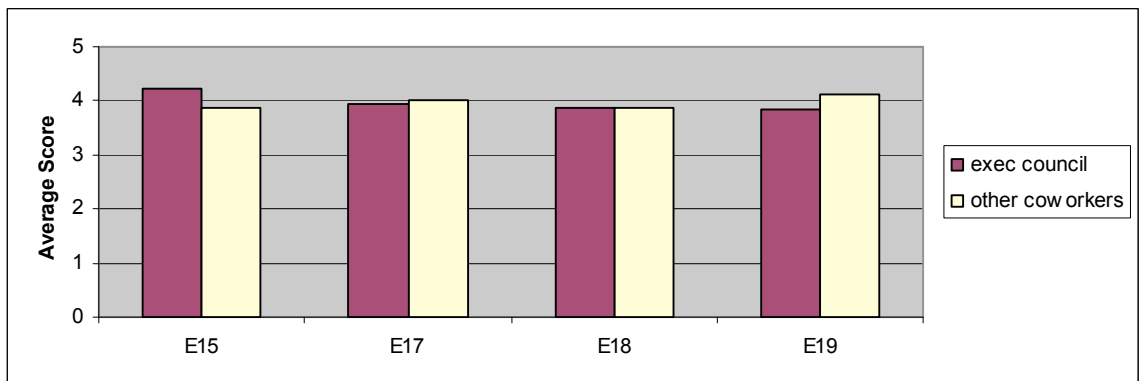


Figure 29: Comparison of Executive Council Members and Other Coworkers

Figure 29 shows how the survey participants view these two groups of coworkers with respect to these four qualities. The average scores for these four questions are: 4.0 for both the executive council members and the other coworkers.

Based on this cross-sectional analysis of the three groups of coworkers, there is a 0.7 point difference between the church planters and the executive council members, and there is a 0.1 point difference between the executive council members and the other coworkers. Using a typical discipleship model that every leader is to train up another one that can take his/her place, the comparison may indicate that the church planters can do more nurturing to the next two levels of coworkers.

4.3.8 The Metrowest Ministries

In Section G, the focus is on the Metrowest ministries. For Questions 1-11, the choices were in the range of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and five indicating *strongly agree*. The questions are:

1. The worship service program is excellent.
2. The fellowship program is excellent.
3. The adult Sunday School program is excellent.
4. The youth program is excellent.
5. The children program is excellent.
6. The nursery program is excellent.
7. The elderly program is excellent.
8. MW is financially sound.
9. MW helps Christians to grow spiritually.
10. MW is friendly to seekers.
11. MW helps seekers understand Christianity.

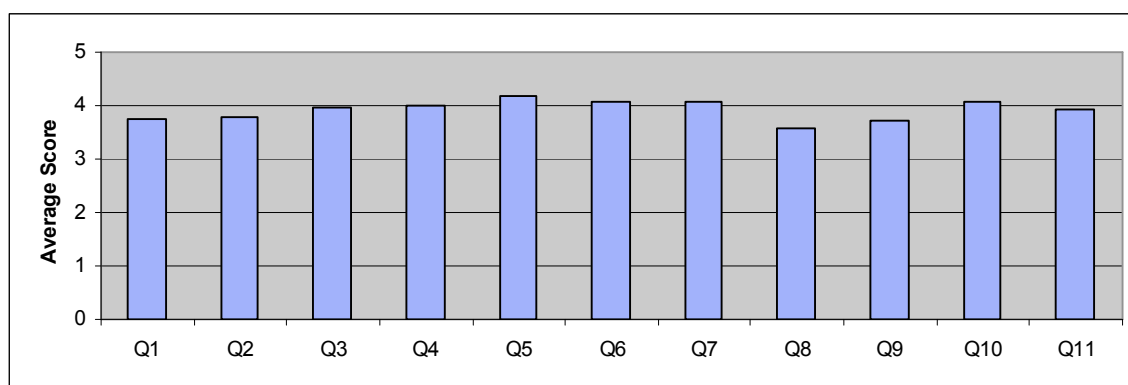


Figure 30: Section G – MW Ministries

The results are shown in Figure 30. It should be noted that the average responses for these questions fall in the range of 3.6 to 4.2. On the higher scoring end, one question (5) received an average score of 4.2, and three questions (6, 7, and 10) received 4.1.

These higher scoring ministries are:

5. The children program is excellent.
6. The nursery program is excellent.
7. The elderly program is excellent.
10. MW is friendly to seekers.

These four higher scoring ministries indicate that the Metrowest church did an excellent job in the people-related supporting ministries including making the seekers feel welcome. On the lower scoring end, one questions (8) received 3.6 and one question (9) received 3.7. These lower scoring qualities are:

8. MW is financially sound.
9. MW helps Christians to grow spiritually.

The first lower scoring ministry (8) indicates that the Metrowest congregation is still not sure of their financial well-being. In reality, the offering pattern discussed in the previous section indicates a very healthy situation and an upward growth trend. The second lower scoring ministry (9) may indicate that many Christians sacrificed their own opportunity for spiritual growth in order to serve others. In Question 12, the participants were asked to give *any other comments about the Metrowest ministries*. Only one comment was received which said “I did not attend worship and adult SS regularly.”

4.3.9 The Involvement and Feeling about the Metrowest Church

In Section H, the focus is on the Metrowest ministries. For Questions 1-19, the choices were in the range of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and five indicating *strongly agree*. The questions are:

1. I attend the MW worship service regularly.
2. I feel God's presence during the MW church worship.
3. I feel comfortable inviting others to the MW worship service
4. I attend the MW Sunday School regularly.
5. I learn a lot in my Sunday School class.
6. I attend the MW Friday night program regularly.
7. I feel comfortable inviting others to Friday night program.
8. I will continue to be in MW in the foreseeable future.
9. I benefit a lot from MW.
10. I have opportunities to serve in MW.
11. I am committed to serve in MW.
12. I am eager to serve in MW.
13. I feel overwhelmed by serving in MW.
14. I feel burnout from serving in MW.
15. I feel being a part of MW.
16. I feel accepted in MW.
17. I feel understood in MW.
18. I feel respected in MW.
19. I feel cared for in MW.

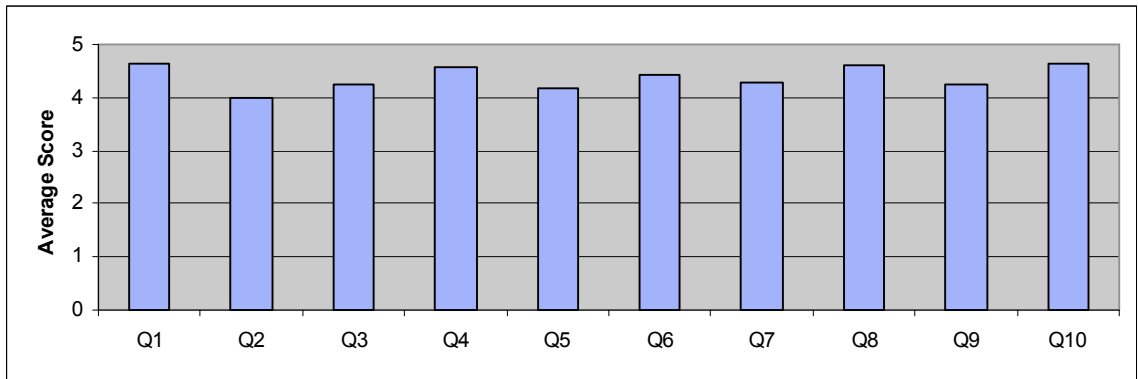


Figure 31: Section H – Involvement and Feeling about MW Part 1

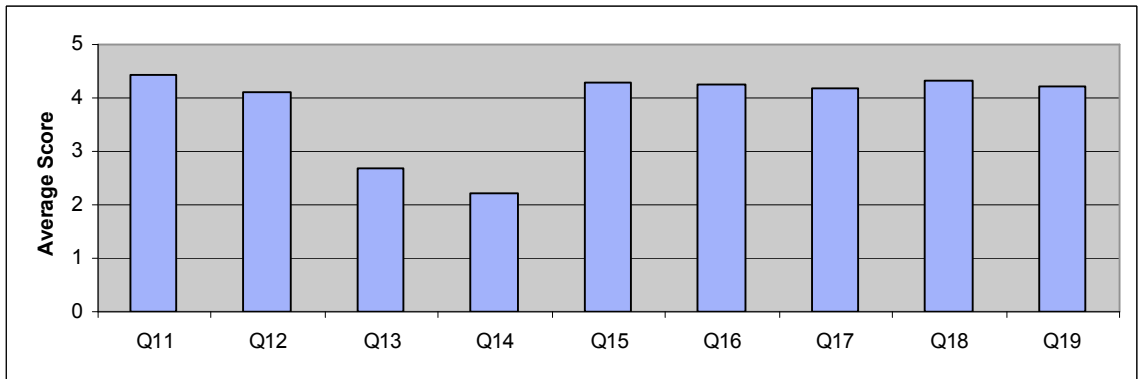


Figure 32: Section H – Involvement and Feeling about MW Part 2

The results are shown in Figures 31 and 32. The results of Questions 13 which reads *I feel overwhelmed by serving in Metrowest* and Question 14 which reads *I feel burnout from serving in Metrowest* should be examined separately. The average score for these the questions are 2.7 and 2.2 respectively. With the high commitment level of church planting, many church planters warn against people being overwhelmed or burned out. Since both scores are under 3.0, the Metrowest coworkers seem to be doing quite well in handling the demand of serving in the church.

For the other questions, the average responses fall in the range of 4.0 to 4.6. On the higher scoring end, four questions (1, 4, 8, and 10) received an average score of 4.6, and no question received 4.51. These higher scoring questions are:

1. I attend the MW worship service regularly.
4. I attend the MW Sunday School regularly.
6. I attend the MW Friday night program regularly.
10. I have opportunities to serve in MW.

These four higher scoring self-reflection questions indicate that those in the Metrowest congregation were very committed to the church programs, and they were offered ample opportunities to serve (but without getting overwhelmed or burned-out as indicated by Questions 13 and 14). On the lower scoring end, one questions (2) received 4.0 and one question (12) received 4.1. These lower scoring questions are:

2. I feel God's presence during the MW church worship.
12. I am eager to serve in MW.

The first lower scoring question (2) indicates that there is much room for improvement in the service. It may also reflect that perhaps the serving (even though not yet to the overwhelmed or burned-out stage) might have created the “Martha” mentality which is drowning out the “Mary” mentality in being with God. The second lower scoring the

question 12 may be a pre-cursor to being overwhelmed or burned-out. The church planters may want to pay particular attention to this result to prevent the downward spiral of spiritual vibrancy due to over-commitment in serving. No comment was received for Question 20 which said: *Any other comments about your involvement and feelings about MW.*

4.3.10 The Feeling of the Elderly about the Metrowest Church

In Section I, the focus is on the feeling of the elderly about the Metrowest church. Questions 1-4 and Questions 5-8 are exactly the same except that first group of questions asked about the father (male) and the second group asked about the mother (female). Given that only three (3) male and four (4) female responses were received (see Figure 33), these two groups of questions were combined together for analysis. For Questions 1-3 (and 5-7), the choices were in the range of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and five indicating *strongly agree*. The questions are:

1. My father/mother likes the MW Sunday worship service.
2. My father/mother likes the MW Sunday School program.
3. My father/mother likes the MW Friday program.
4. Any other comments your father/mother has about MW:

The results are shown in Figure 34. The average scores are 3.6, 3.6, and 3.5 for worship service, Sunday School program, and Friday night Fellowship program respectively.

This indicates a moderate liking by the elderly to all the major programs in the Metrowest church. This result is slightly lower than the response to Section G, Question 7 which reads *the elderly program is excellent* with a score 4.1. Perhaps the perception of the congregation (as measure in Section G) and that of their parents (as measured in this Section) is slightly different. No comments were received for Questions 4 and 8.

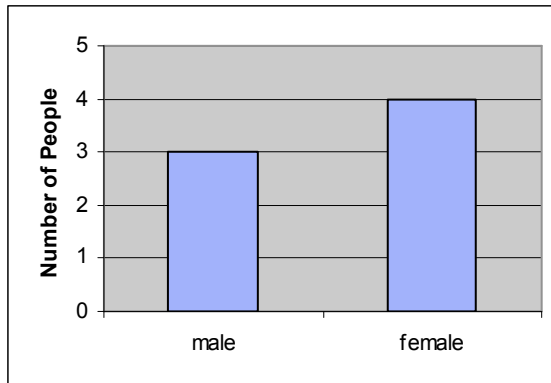


Figure 33: Section I – Parents' Gender

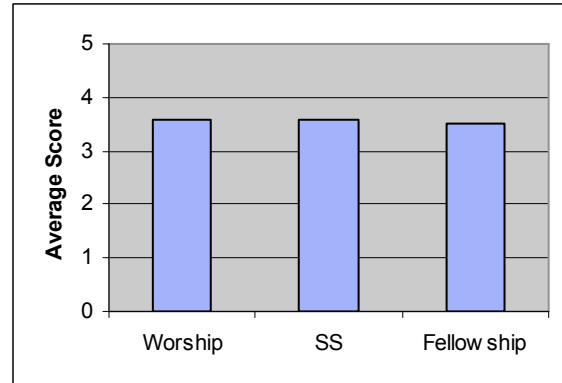


Figure 34: Section I – Parents' Response

4.3.11 The Feeling of the Children about the Metrowest Church

In Section J, the focus is on the children's feeling about the Metrowest church. Questions 1-4, Questions 5-8, and Questions 9-12 are exactly the same except that a first, second, and third child were being asked respectively. Similar to the elderly, these three groups were combined together for analysis. For Questions 1-3 (and 5-7 and 9-11), the choices were in the range of 1 to 5 with 1 indicating *strongly disagree* and five indicating *strongly agree*. The questions are:

1. My first child likes the MW Sunday worship service.
2. My first child likes the MW Sunday School program.
3. My first child likes the MW Friday program.
 - a. My first child is: (boy or girl)
 - b. His/her age group:

Question 3 (and 7 and 11) also asked the participants to indicate (a) the gender of the child; and (b) the age group of the child. Figure 35 shows the age group distribution of the children. The eight age groups are divided into children (grade 5 and under) and youth (grade 6 and above). Altogether, there were a total of seventeen responses from children and nine from youth.

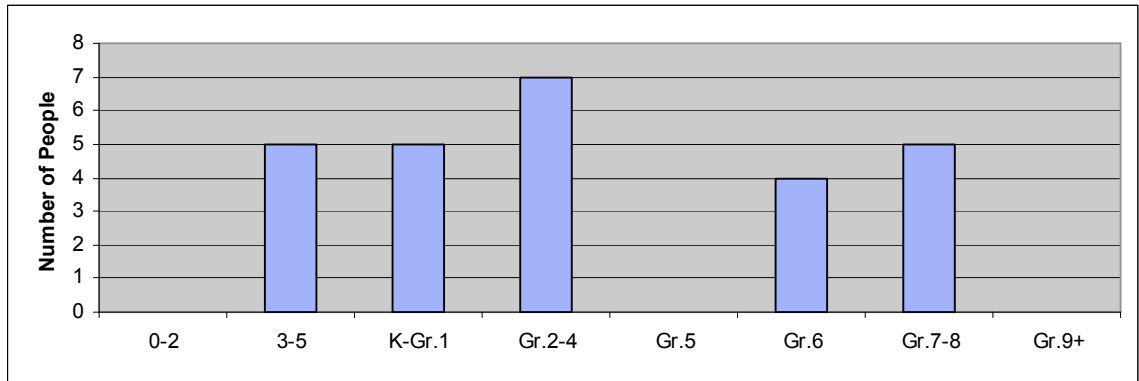


Figure 35: Section J – Youth & Children

Figure 36 shows the number of boys (3) and girls (5) who provided response from among the youth. The total did not add up to nine (9) because the gender for one of the survey return was missing. Figure 37 shows their preference for the three major church programs. The average scores are 3.6, 3.4, and 4.4 for worship, Sunday School, and fellowship program respectively. This shows that the youth has a strong preference for fellowship program (which is more relaxed and fun) than for worship and Sunday School (which is more formal). The average score of the three youth programs is 3.8 which is comparable to the response to Section G, Question 4 which reads *the youth program is excellent* with a score 4.0. This is to say that the parents' perception and the youth's experience just about match each other.

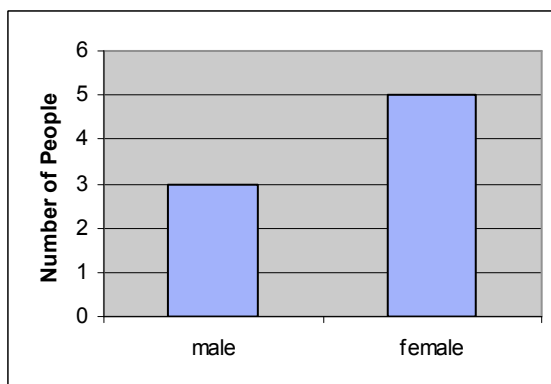


Figure 36: Section J – Youth's Gender

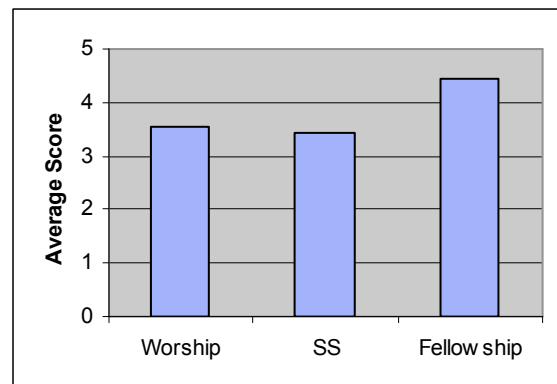


Figure 37: Section J – Youth's Response

Figure 38 shows the number of boys (7) and girls (10) who provided response from among the children. Figure 39 shows their preference for the three major church programs. The average scores are 4.4, 4.3, and 4.5 for worship, Sunday School, and fellowship program respectively. This shows that the children like the three major program about equally. These scores are comparable to the response to Section G, Question 5 which reads *the children program is excellent* with a score 4.2. This is to say that the parents' perception and the children's experience just about match each other.

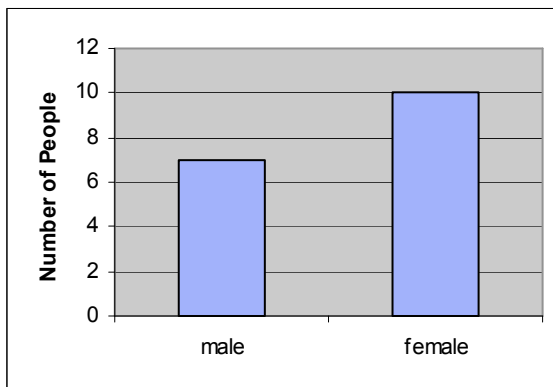


Figure 38: Section J – Children's Gender

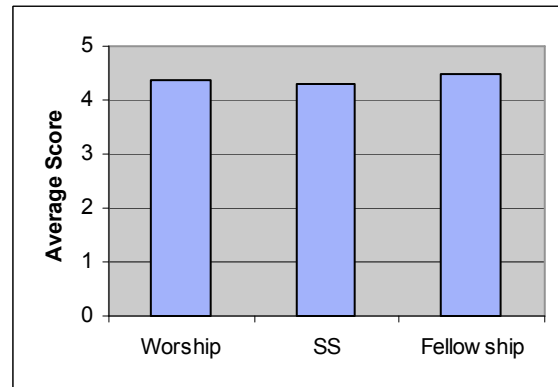


Figure 39: Section J – Children's Response

Questions 4, 8, and 12 asked *any other comments your child has about Metrowest church*. Two comments were received, the first was offered by a girl in grade 7-8 and the second by a boy in grade 6:

1. I don't like the current place we are having Sunday service. Hope it can move to a different place.
2. I think that the church should move out of Gates School because I think that Gates has limited space and the students at Gates complain about their stuff being touched/taken.

Both responses pertain to the location/facility of the current meeting place. This is consistent with the comments received in Section C where many survey participants expressed the desire to move to a church facility – whether renting or permanent.

4.3.12 The Final Comments

In Section K, the participants were asked to give *any other comments about the Metrowest church*. Only two comments were received which say:

1. I assumed over all things planned and executed fairly smoothly, but for personal reason I still felt about the Metrowest church is more fellowship-style rather than church-style.
2. Our church is strongly family oriented, which is really good thing. To grow our church is first priority in my opinion, we must absorb more families to join and become Christian so to expand God's family.

The first comment alludes to the “incomplete” transition from a fellowship group to that of a church. It is not clear what particular area was meant by this comment. Perhaps that due to the long existence of Metrowest fellowship group(s), the supposedly “new” modus operandi of the church was still dominated by the “old” modus operandi of the fellowship.

The second comment indicates that the Metrowest church should continue to reach out and expand. The Metrowest church has been in existence for only fifteen months. Perhaps another survey should be done after another fifteen months in order to monitor the continuing growth of this church. This also leads to the next and final chapter which covers the lessons learned from the Metrowest church planting.

4.3.13 A Brief Summary

In Summary, the survey examined the Metrowest church planting effort – the preparation that went before the planting; the choice of past and current locations and facilities; the evaluation of the church planters, executive council members, and the other coworkers; the current ministries in the church plant; and the congregation's involvement and feeling about the church plant.

The results of the survey were discussed along with the analyses. The overall response was very encouraging. However, there are also several important lessons learned from this church planting effort that demand more detailed examination. They are covered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Reflections on the CBCGB-Metrowest Church Planting

5.1 Lessons Learned from the Planting of the Metrowest Church

As of January 2008, the Metrowest church has been established for fifteen months. In many ways, it is still very much an infant church. From another perspective, however, it has already attained a certain stature and stability. While there are more than twenty Chinese churches in the Greater Boston area, only four churches have over 200 people (children included). Many of the others churches are in the range of 100-200, and the rest are under 100 people. So, in that respect, the Metrowest church is already considered a second tier Chinese church in terms of size.

On the other hand, the Metrowest church does not have a full-time pastor since Pastor Choi returned to the mother church after a fifteen-month assignment. With the youth and children ministry flourishing, there is also a need for at least a part-time staff to lead this ministry. The reality is that both Chinese speaking pastors and youth pastors are in short supply, and it is not clear when they will appear at the Metrowest church.

Furthermore, the use of the Gates Elementary School in Acton for worship service is not ideal. Besides some of the facility constraints of typical elementary schools, the principal of the Gates Elementary School informed the Metrowest church that the school will not be available during the summer months for their annual school clean-up. While the superintendent of the Acton Schools has arranged the Metrowest church to use the junior high school facility for those two months, the moving back and forth may cause confusion for some people and it will also take an additional toll on the Metrowest church

coworkers. It is not clear when the Metrowest church will find a more “permanent” facility. This and other standing issues of the church will be discussed along with the lessons learned based on the Metrowest church survey results.

5.1.1 Choice of Location for Church Planting

In Section C of Metrowest church survey, Question 2 reads: *where do you think is the most suitable location (please specify)*. While the majority prefers Acton or Boxborough, there are two comments (minority) suggesting it should be located “further west” and “outside (west) of Route 495.” To better understand the viewpoints of the majority and minority in this location preference, it helps to lay down some observations:

Observation 1: The three locations where the Metrowest church has met are basically all along Route 111. The first location, Boxborough Holiday Inn is located in west Boxborough at the intersection of Route 111 and Route 495. The second location, Harvard High School is on Route 111 about five minutes *west* of the Boxborough Holiday Inn. The third location, Gates Elementary School in west Acton is off Route 111 about five minutes *east* of Boxborough Holiday Inn. Extending eastward, Route 111 merges into Route 2, and CBCGB is off Route 2 about fifteen to twenty minutes *east* of Gates Elementary School.

Observation 2: The majority of the Chinese population in the Metrowest area lives in Acton with Boxborough being a distant second.

Observation 3: Based on the church attendance, it was quite clear that there was a drop in attendance when the Metrowest church moved from Boxborough Holiday Inn to

the Harvard High School. The attendance went back up when the Metrowest church moved from the Harvard High School to the Gates Elementary School in Acton.

Planting new churches often involves two often opposing options. The first option is to plant churches where the target people are, and the second option is to plant churches among the people who have no easy access to the gospel. The majority of the Metrowest church members who prefer planting the Metrowest church in Acton basically are choosing the first option. Planting a church in Harvard which is 15-20 minutes away from those who live in Acton may be too long a drive for the non-Christians (and perhaps some young Christians) to attend church. The attendance pattern (Observation 3) clearly demonstrates this reality. Instead, planting a church in Acton where most of the Chinese live (Observation 2) will be more likely to succeed.

The minority of the Metrowest church members who prefer planting the Metrowest church in Harvard basically are choosing the second option. It can be argued that the Chinese who live in Acton already have access to the gospel in their native language since CBCGB is only 15-20 minutes away (Observation 1). There are some Chinese (though not as many) who live much further west who would benefit from having a Chinese church in Harvard which is still a good 30-minute drive for them.

It is quite clear that both options have their merits, and which is better may need to be decided on a location by location basis as the congregation continues to develop. In this case, it can be argued that the difference is not substantial (only 10 minutes), and there are many other important factors about planting a church. Perhaps this sentiment is reflected in one of the comments in Section C Question 10 which asks participants to *give any other comments about the MW location and facility*. The comment was “I don't

think the location matters.” If the majority and minority preference of the Metrowest church become a dividing issue and much energy is spent on arguing over the preferred location, then much is lost. It will be much better to submit to one another and work toward the common goal.

Looking at this from another angle, if one chooses a strategy that is too aggressive, it may fail because it is ahead of its time. In this case, it can be argued that the second option may be too aggressive, and the first option is more realistic. Nevertheless, even if the first option is adopted, one should never forget about reaching to the Chinese population further west. Perhaps just as CBCGB (Lexington) planted CBCGL (Chelmsford) in the north, and fifteen years later, CBCGL planted CBCGN (Nashua, New Hampshire) further north, the Metrowest church (Acton) can plant another church further west in the future.

5.1.2 Choice of Facility

While most church planting experts advise church planters to delay procuring a permanent facility, it is not clear if this is applicable to the Metrowest congregation. In Section C Question 4 which reads *where do you think is the most suitable facility (please specify)*. There were a plethora of write-in comments. Four (4) people indicated “renting a church;” three (3) indicated “having a permanent church;” and three (3) mentioned others. The preference to have their own church facility was mentioned again in Questions 10 where the participants were asked to give *any other comments about the MW location and facility*.

One reason why the majority of the Metrowest church members prefer to worship in a church facility is that most of them have been worshipping in some church facility previously. It seems like a sacrifice for many of them to worship in a less-than-ideal facility. Such sentiment, if it is indeed the case, is understandable given that most people will choose a church that fit their needs. Nonetheless, people still desire a “better place” as they look forward to the future.

A second reason may be that the use of an existing church for the Friday night fellowship groups program provides a constant contrast and reminder of the comfort and convenience of using a church. Unfortunately, no existing church facility in the Acton-Boxborough area is available on Sunday mornings. There are some churches available on Sunday afternoon; however, this conflicts with the Acton Chinese Language School program which is attended by many of the Chinese in the area. This leaves only one option which is for the Metrowest church to procure its own church facility.

However, procuring a permanent facility in the Metrowest area has proved to be quite difficult. Along with some coworkers, Elder Li of the Metrowest church had explored over thirty different properties that were available and deemed “suitable” for the church. Among them, three properties were further explored by the Metrowest congregation with the arrangement of open house on Saturdays. The first one was a home with 12.8 acres of land in Bolton. The property was large enough and the price was reasonable. However, it was obvious that the location was too far away. The second property was a horse farm in Acton. The location and lot size are both suitable, but the asking price was two million dollars – way above what the Metrowest congregation could afford

Finally, there was a property with an 18-room house on three acres of land in Littleton at the border of Acton. The total cost including renovation was estimated to be one million dollars. This was deemed a dream property by the Metrowest congregation, but the cost was still high. A proposal for financial assistance was made to the mother church leadership and they decided to underwrite up to half the cost in a form of a gift or loan. This decision was very generous and greatly appreciated by the Metrowest congregation. Many Metrowest church members were very excited about this prospect and they accepted the challenge to raise the other half of the cost through a faith pledge including donation and loans. For some unknown reason, the owner of the property did not respond to the purchase offer and the procurement plan fell through.

Even though the above procurement did not materialize, the exercise was extremely valuable. It revealed the genuine care and support of the mother church toward the daughter church. *Hiving off* from the mother church is in and of itself a difficult endeavor. If there is not enough support from the mother church, some members of the daughter church may feel betrayed and regret joining the new church plant. They can always take an easy way out and return to the comfort of the mother church, or go to another well-established church. As such, the goal to plant a new church with an intention that it may someday stand on its own feet may become less tenable. Many of the Chinese churches in the Greater Boston area were “planted” over the years using one method or another. It is not clear how many have accomplished the original goals of the church planters.

5.1.3 Mobilizing People to Serve

In Section D of the Metrowest church survey regarding the church planters, there were four areas that received relatively lower scores. Two of them have to do with mobilizing people to serve: *they challenge people to serve* and *they set standards for people to serve*.

To better understand the context, there are seven questions in Section D which are used to evaluate how well the church planters mobilize people to serve. The following is a list of these seven questions:

12. They inspire people to serve.
13. They encourage people to serve.
14. They challenge people to serve.
15. They set examples for people to serve.
16. They set standards for people to serve.
17. They appreciate people who serve.
18. They take time to nurture people who serve.

In relative terms, the church planters score high in #17, low in #14 and #16, and medium in all the others. In other words, they did well to appreciate, and reasonably well to inspire, encourage, train, and set examples for people to serve. In contrast, they did not do as well in challenging and setting standards for people to serve.

A careful comparison of the two lower score questions against the other five reveals that scoring high in these two questions may potentially produce negative results. For example, over challenging people to serve may result in giving people undue pressure. Similarly, setting too high a standard for people to serve may result in scaring people away from serving. How to challenge and set standards for people to serve without intimidating them is perhaps a very delicate balancing act.

In the case of the Metrowest church planters, it appears that they might have played safe and relied mostly on the mechanisms that do not have adverse effect in mobilizing people to serve. Section A, Question 6 of the survey reveals that there is a high percentage (91%) of Christians involved in serving. Furthermore, Section H Questions 10-14 reveals that the people in the Metrowest congregation felt that they had opportunity, were committed and somewhat eager to serve, but they were not overwhelmed or burnout. So, in a sense, the “play safe” strategy seems to have worked well.

On the other hand, one may ask whether such a “play safe” strategy may have had some drawbacks. This is especially true about setting standards for people to serve. Without setting adequate standards, some people may be serving but not fully exercising their potentials. Worse yet, there is a possibility that some people may serve according to what they think is the “right” way to serve. Given that the coworkers may not be as spiritually mature (this appears to be the case as revealed in Figure 27 which compares the spiritual character of the church planters to that of the executive council and the other coworkers), the carnality of some coworkers may seep into the church ministry. Once this is established, such carnality in ministry may be difficult to change and may impact the future of the church.

5.1.4 Communication

The other two areas that received relatively lower scores in Section D regarding the church planters have to do with communication: *they communicate well on the vision* and *they communicate well on the status of the church*. Communication typically

involves a sender and a receiver. However, simply transmitting a message through some communication channel between the sender and the receiver seldom accomplishes the goal. In a more elaborate modeling of a successful communication process, each of the five stages must be done well: (1) the message as a concept must be clear in the mind of the sender; (2) the sender must encode the message in a form appropriate for the communication channel; (3) the communication channel must be an effective conduit between the sender and the receiver; (4) the receiver must be able to decode the message; and (5) the receiver must be able to let the message register and affect his/her behavior.¹⁶² Since the sender (church planters) has no control over stages 4 and 5, only stages 1 through 3 will be discussed.

The communication of *vision* is the most difficult. At times, the church planters may start with only a general notion of the vision to planting a church. This general notion becomes clearer as time and situation unfold. Before then, the general notion of the vision communicated will be quite blurry to the congregation just as it is blurry in the mind of the church planters. In communicating the status of the church planting effort, the church planters must have such information at their finger tips. Such information is not just raw data but processed and digested data. Without such information, the status of the church plant will only be vague in the mind of the church planter. This potential breakdown in stage 1 can be overcome by sharp vision about the church plant and good and timely information generation mechanism.

Second, the church planters may have a very clear vision of church planting or good information regarding the status of the church planting effort. However, if they do not know how to articulate that vision or how to transform the information in a way

¹⁶² Duane Litfin, *Public Speaking*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992), 18-21.

suitable for communication, the congregation will only receive a distorted form of the vision or the status. This potential breakdown in stage 2 can be overcome by logical thinking and delivery of the message.

Third, even when the church planters can articulate their vision or the status well, the communication channels may not be effective conduits. The potential breakdown in stage 3 can be overcome by transmitting the message many times and in a variety of ways over different communication channels. This requires creative thinking and ceaseless trying.

Perhaps a good mechanism for feedback gathering needs to be established to help the church planters assess how well the congregation understand the messages transmitted. A survey similar to what was described in the previous chapter may be one of such mechanisms for feedback gathering.

5.2 Impact of the Metrowest Church Planting

Having discussed some of the lessons learned from the Metrowest church planting, it is appropriate to examine the impact this church planting effort has made. This can be assessed in three areas: (1) the Metrowest congregation; (2) the Metrowest Chinese population; and (3) the mother church.

5.2.1 Impact on the Metrowest Congregation

First, the Metrowest congregation has grown very rapidly since the church was finally planted. Among the executive council members, only one person is known to have been asked previously to serve as a deacon in the mother church. Among the others,

it is not clear how many would have become deacons in the mother church, and how soon. In the Metrowest church, they take on the responsibilities comparable to deacons in a church. Their commitment and involvement to church ministry surge in proportion to the tasks with which they are entrusted. Many among them also realize their spiritual inadequacy and take time to engage in spiritual disciplines such as the daily systematic reading of the Bible and prayer.

The same can be said regarding those who take on the role as presiders for leading church worship services. With one experienced presider coming once a month from the mother church, the new presiders model themselves after how he leads worship, echoing his prayer and his demeanor without losing their own style and uniqueness. They also take time to prepare and many express that preparing to lead worship is hard work. Such hard work pays dividend not only in the way they lead worship, but also in their spiritual growth. Again, many of them would not have been likely to take up such responsibility in the mother church. Similar challenges and growth are evident among the coworkers in other ministry areas including the small group leaders, Bible study leaders, adult Sunday School teachers, as well as youth and children coworkers.

The congregation at large has also grown. Quite a few Christians who attend the Metrowest church regularly comment that they were only occasional worshipers at the mother church. In fact, not only have they become regular worshipers; they also engage in serving as well. Besides that, the congregation has also become a very close-knit community. They motivate each other to grow spiritually and support one another in the practical aspects of daily living.

One example in particular deserves highlighting. The annual Marriage Enrichment Retreat was started in the mother church some five years ago. The response had been lukewarm for the first few years since this retreat carries a stigma as a remedial event for broken families. While the stigma is slowly disappearing in the mother church and attendance has been picked up, the retreat is one of the most popular events among the Metrowest church members. This is due largely to the smaller church community and the recommendation through word of mouth among the church members. Such enthusiasm and participation in the retreat result in much improved family relationships which further help to strengthen the Metrowest church.

5.2.2 Impact on the Metrowest Chinese Population

It was mentioned earlier that the Metrowest church congregation forms a small closely-knit community. The sense of community is also present in the Metrowest Chinese population at large. The Acton Chinese Language School is perhaps most instrumental in bringing about this phenomenon. Many of the Christians in the Metrowest church are also in the Metrowest Chinese community.

It has been the tradition of the Metrowest church to organize an annual camping trip during the July Fourth long weekend and a summer picnic at a state park in August. Both events are open to the community and many non-Christians join the Christians in these activities. As friendships are established – some because of their children – many slowly come to the Metrowest church on Sundays or the fellowship group programs on Friday nights. As a result, some of them become Christians. During the first fifteen months of the Metrowest church, twelve people were baptized. Given the Metrowest

congregation size of about 90 adults, this translates to approximately 10% growth per year. Such growth is largely due to friendship evangelism efforts.

Of course, it will take quite some time for the Christian faith to penetrate more fully into the Chinese community. In Section B of the Metrowest church planting survey, Question 12 asks the participants to give *any other comments about the MW church planting*. One of the comments received reads: “There is a Chinese school over there, where a lot of potential Christian can be found, but somehow the Chinese school is so good that some of the people there think going to church is duplicated things.” From the perspective of the non-Christians, going to church may indeed be perceived as another cultural thing (not necessarily from Chinese culture). Such a perception is a good thing given that traditional Chinese consider Christianity as from a foreign culture. If friendship evangelism is done well, this perception may slowly lead to wide acceptance of the Christian faith and perhaps significant assimilation into the Metrowest Chinese community.

5.2.3 Impact on the Mother Church

The Metrowest church plant has generated much excitement for the brothers and sisters in the mother church. This was evidenced during the annual joint worship service at the end of September 2006 when the members of the Metrowest congregation were commissioned. The people who were *hived off* to the Metrowest church initially created a small dent in the mother church. Within one year, however, the empty pews were again occupied.

The positive impact can also be felt among the youth. In November of 2007, the youth ministry of the mother church organized a special *invite your friend to come* night. The Metrowest youth were invited to join in this occasion. Three vans loaded with junior high students came from the Metrowest church. The Metrowest youth were glad to reconnect with old friends and make new friends. The mother church organizes a junior high retreat every year in February during the school break. As of January, twenty or so Metrowest junior high students have already signed up for this retreat, and they constitute about 30% of the registrants. The participation of the Metrowest youth also brings new excitement in and stimulation to the mother church junior high youth group.

The mother church congregation members rejoice whenever reports of growth in the Metrowest congregation are brought back. The church leadership expressed strong support to the Metrowest church when they requested help toward the procurement of a property (which eventually fell through). The total financial support of five hundred thousand dollars in gifts and loan is roughly equivalent to 75% of the mother church building fund (though not all the money is expected to come out of that fund). This is during a time when the mother church is considering building a new multi-purpose facility to alleviate some of its space constraint. This financial underpinning is selfless and sacrificial as some among the mother church leadership have proposed delaying building the multi-purpose facility in order to support the Metrowest church. This clearly indicates that the faith and love of the mother church have also grown.

5.3 Future Church Planting in the Greater Boston Area

As the Metrowest church is slowly being established, the mother church is starting to explore other church planting initiatives. The most prominent project is the establishment of a gospel center (or perhaps a few gospel centers) near Boston University (BU), Harvard University, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) area. Two fellowship groups have been firmly established: one on MIT campus (the northern side of the Charles River) and the other one near BU campus (the southern side of the Charles River). Both campus fellowship groups have participants from Harvard University, and there are about thirty people in each group. In June 2007, a budget comparable to that of the Metrowest church plant was set aside for the establishment of this gospel center. In 2008, one pastor with twenty years experience in student ministry has committed himself to lead this ministry.

There is also a Macedonian call from among the Christians who live around the town of Sharon which is about forty minutes south of Lexington. CBCGB would like to become more engaged in gospel ministry in the south as more resources become available. Thereafter, the needs in the town of Andover and other places can be examined. Given that the Metrowest church planting is currently without a pastor, it will be advisable, if feasible, to recruit new pastoral staff prior to the establishment of any future church plants.

The church planting effort in the Greater Boston area is not the exclusive right of CBCGB. During a recent New England Chinese pastor prayer meeting on January 10, 2008, the Chinese Gospel Church shared that their English congregation has been blessed with the presence of Hispanics, Black, Japanese, Koreans, mixed (Caucasian and Asian)

couples, Caucasian couples who have adopted Chinese children, etc. They further made an announcement that they plan to re-launch their English ministry in September 2008 as the Renewal Community Church. This will be a multi-ethnic church collocated in the same facility of the Chinese Gospel Church. The participants in the pastoral prayer meeting greeted the news with much excitement and enthusiasm, and many prayers were offered for this new ministry. The planting of more Chinese churches is needed in the Greater Boston area, as also is the planting of multi-ethnic churches. This vision is the Lord's vision, as expressed in Revelation 5:9-10 which says:

And they sang a new song: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

APPENDIX A

CBCGB-MW Charter Membership and Executive Council

A proposal drafted by King-Fai Choi

November 29, 2006

I would like to propose the formation of the CBCGB-MW Executive Council (西區分堂執行同工會). The function of this council is to oversee the ministry of CBCGB-MW under the jurisdiction of the mother church (CBCGB). The first step toward the formation of the CBCGB-MW Executive Council is the establishment of CBCGB-MW charter membership (西區分堂會員). The following is a description of the CBCGB-MW charter membership, the CBCGB-MW Executive Council, and the relationship between CBCGB-MW and the mother church.

I. CBCGB-MW Charter Membership

A. Admission

1. A Christian, 18 years or older, may become a CBCGB-MW charter member (hereafter, charter member) after fulfilling all of the following conditions:
 - a. Baptized in CBCGB or any other church with similar statement of faith;
 - b. Committed to the mission of CBCGB-MW and attend the church's worship services regularly;
 - c. Submitting a CBCGB-MW charter membership application; and
 - d. Approved by Elder Mingche Li and Pastor King-Fai Choi.
2. A Christian, 18 years or older who is baptized in CBCGB-MW will automatically become a charter member.

B. Duration

1. Upon approval by the above-mentioned admission process, the person will immediately become a charter member.
2. A charter member may maintain his/her current membership at CBCGB or any other church before CBCGB-MW becomes independent.
3. When CBCGB-MW becomes independent, all charter members will become founding members of the new independent church.

C. Responsibilities and privileges

1. Charter members are expected to actively participate in the ministry of CBCGB-MW.
2. Charter members are eligible to be elected as CBCGB-MW Executive Council members.
3. Charter members are eligible to vote for CBCGB-MW related matters including the election of CBCGB-MW Executive Council members.

II. CBCGB-MW Executive Council

A. Qualifications

1. The members of the CBCGB-MW Executive Council (hereafter, the council) must be charter members.
2. The council members must demonstrate servanthood attitude and spiritual leadership qualities as outlined in the Bible (1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1: 6-9).
3. The council members are committed to a biweekly training led by Pastor King-Fai for spiritual and practical ministry guidance for about 6 months.

B. Composition and Election

1. The first council shall consist of seven members. The current council will determine the size of the future council.
2. The council members shall be elected by the charter members.
3. The council will decide among themselves one chairperson, one secretary, and the other council members will take on the responsibility of overseeing various areas of ministry of CBCGB-MW.

C. Responsibility

1. The council shall oversee the ministry of CBCGB-MW under the jurisdiction of the mother church.
2. The council shall also be the proper representation of CBCGB-MW to work with the mother church regarding matters such as the process, the timing, and the transition of becoming independent.

D. Term of service

1. The term for the council members shall be one year or until such a time when the council is dissolved after CBCGB-MW becomes independent.

III. The Relationship Between CBCGB-MW and the Mother Church

A. Models being considered

1. CBCGB-MW will become totally independent after a period of time, much like the relationship of CBCGB and CBCGL (Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell).
2. CBCGB will maintain two campuses but one governing structure, much like BCEC (Boston Chinese Evangelical Church) with its two campuses – Chinatown and Newton.
3. CBCGB-MW will become totally independent after a period of time, but it will form an association with the mother church to pool together resources for missions, social concern, church planting, and other church ministry where there is synergistic advantage. We will also invite CBCGL and CBCGN (Chinese Bible Church of Greater Nashua) to join us to consider the formation of this association.

B. The current inclination

1. Before CBCGB-MW becomes independent, the Board of Elders of CBCGB shall have full responsibility over CBCGB-MW. This includes the assignment of elders and pastors to guide CBCGB-MW.
2. After CBCGB-MW becomes independent, the mother church and CBCGB-MW shall form an association which may include CBCGL and CBCGN.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *What is the CBCGB-MW executive council election process?*

We may want to use a “write-in” process for the first CBCGB-MW Executive Council election. In this process, every charter member can write-in up to seven names (all charter members) in the ballot. Elder Mingche and Pastor King-Fai will tally the ballots, contact the people with the most votes to make sure they accept this responsibility. It is assumed that no married couple can both serve as council members. The council will decide on the election process and the size of the future council.

2. *What is the timetable for forming the council?*

Here are some tentative dates:

- 12/9 – Approval of this proposal by the CBCGB BOE / CC
- 12/10 – Charter membership application starts
- 12/17 – Charter membership application ends
- 12/24 – Charter membership confirmed; all charter members will be notified of their membership and receive a sample ballot containing the names of all charter members. The notification will be done primarily through email; postal mail will be used for those without email access.
- 12/31 – Election of council. The official ballots will be given out during 10-10:15a. and 12-12:15p. Charter members will prayerfully seek the Lord’s guidance, check up to seven names, and put the ballots into a ballot box shortly after they receive them. No absentee ballot will be available for this election. The ballots will be given to Elder Mingche and Pastor King-Fai for tally.
- 12/31 – Notifying elected council members. The council will serve from 1/1/2007 to 12/31/2007.
- 1/3/07 (Wednesday) – First council meeting to be chaired by Pastor King-Fai. Assignment of responsibility of council members will be done during that meeting. Future council meetings will be held once a month to be chaired by the new council chairperson.

3. *When will CBCGB-MW become independent?*

The timing for CBCGB-MW becoming independent will be determined jointly by the mother church and the CBCGB-MW Executive Council. The main factors to be considered are the spiritual maturity of the leadership and the financial readiness of CBCGB-MW. The leadership of CBCGB is committed to help CBCGB-MW to become spiritually mature and independent.

APPENDIX B

Survey on the Metrowest Church Planting

The CBCGB-Metrowest (MW) church was planted on October 1, 2006. This survey is conducted to understand and evaluate the MW church planting process and impact. The result will help us understand what we do well and what we can improve. It will also be useful to similar church planting efforts in the future. This survey is done also as a part of my doctor of ministry thesis-project. Your participation is purely voluntary, but much appreciated. Please complete the survey and email it to me at kacpchoi@gmail.com by Monday, December 31, 2007. (Or email it to Weiran Xu at xu_weiran@yahoo.com if you want to keep your feedback anonymous – Weiran will forward the attachment to me without disclosing the identity of the original sender.) Thank you.

King-Fai

A. Background Information (please click on your answer):

1. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. Age: ☐ 21-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ Above 60
3. How long have you been with the Metrowest (MW) church / fellowship group?
☐ After October 1, 2007
☐ Before October 1, 2007, but less than 3 years
☐ 3-5 years
☐ More than 5 years
4. How long have you been a Christian?
☐ After October 1, 2007
☐ Before October 1, 2007, but less than 3 years
☐ 3-5 years
☐ More than 5 years
☐ I am not a Christian yet
5. Are you a charter member of MW church? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Are you involved in serving in MW church? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. If yes, what area do you serve in (please choose one or more answers)?
☐ Executive council member (2007 or 2008)
☐ Worship ministry coworker
☐ Caring / fellowship ministry coworker
☐ Adult Sunday School teacher
☐ Youth or children ministry coworkers
☐ Others (please specify): _____

Sections B-J: Unless otherwise noted, please select a number between 1-5 to indicate your response with: 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree; N/A = not applicable.

B. General questions about Metrowest church planting:

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
1. I understand the vision for planting the MW church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The planting of a Chinese church in the MW area is needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The MW area can support a Chinese church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The planting of the MW church was well-planned.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The planting of the MW church was well-executed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The MW church receives a lot of support from CBCGB.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Many people prayed a lot for the planting of the MW church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I prayed a lot for the planting of the MW church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The timing for planting the MW church was:						
<input type="checkbox"/> Too soon <input type="checkbox"/> Just right <input type="checkbox"/> Too late <input type="checkbox"/> N/A						
10. I think MW has made a lot of progress in October 2006.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I think MW has the potential to grow.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Any other comments about the MW church planting: _____						

C. Location and facility of the Metrowest church (MW):

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
1. Rate the suitability of the three geographical locations (1=least suitable; 5=most suitable)						
a. Boxborough	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Harvard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Acton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Where do you think is the most suitable location (please specify): _____						
3. Rate the suitability of the three types of facilities (1=least suitable; 5=most suitable)						
a. Hotel (like the Boxborough Holiday Inn)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Middle School (like the Harvard MS)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Elementary School (like the Acton Gates ES)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. What do you think is the most suitable facility (please specify): _____						
5. MW moves too frequently (1=strongly disagree, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The MW's moves are unavoidable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. MW should move to a permanent facility as soon as possible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. MW should own a permanent facility as soon as possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. MW can afford to own a permanent facility. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
10. Any other comments about the MW location and facility: _____

D. Metrowest church planters (elder & pastor):

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. They demonstrate passion for God. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. They demonstrate passion for people. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. They demonstrate good spiritual character | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. They demonstrate spiritual leadership. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. They demonstrate accountability. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. They have a clear vision in church planting. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. They communicate well on the vision. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. They communicate well on the status of the church. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. They have spiritual gifts for church planting. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. They complement each other. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. They demonstrate good teamwork. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. They inspire people to serve. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. They encourage people to serve. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. They challenge people to serve. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. They set examples for people to serve. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. They set standards for people to serve. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. They appreciate people who serve. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. They take time to nurture people who serve. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. They care for the people in the church. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Any other comments about the MW church planters: _____ | | | | | | |

E. Metrowest executive council members (2007 or 2008):

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. They demonstrate passion for God. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. They demonstrate passion for people. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. They demonstrate good spiritual character. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. They demonstrate spiritual leadership. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. They demonstrate accountability. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. They complement each other. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. They demonstrate good teamwork. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. They inspire people to serve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. They encourage people to serve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. They challenge people to serve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. They set examples for people to serve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. They set standards for people to serve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. They appreciate people who serve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. They take time to nurture people who serve.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. They know the people in the church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. They care for the people in the church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. They are faithful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. They are available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. They are teachable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Any other comments about the MW executive council members: _____						

F. Other Metrowest coworkers:

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
1. They demonstrate passion for God.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. They demonstrate passion for people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. They demonstrate good spiritual character.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. They demonstrate accountability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. They know the people in the church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. They care for the people in the church.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. They are faithful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. They are available.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. They are teachable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Any other comments about the other MW coworkers: _____						

G. Metrowest Ministries:

	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
1. The worship service program is excellent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The fellowship program is excellent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The adult Sunday School program is excellent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The youth program is excellent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The children program is excellent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The nursery program is excellent.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7. The elderly program is excellent. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. MW is financially sound. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. MW helps Christians to grow spiritually. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. MW is friendly to seekers. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. MW helps seekers understand Christianity. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Any other comments about the MW ministries: _____ | | | | | | |

H. Your involvement and feeling about the Metrowest church:

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I attend the MW worship service regularly. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. I feel God's presence during the MW church worship. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I feel comfortable inviting others to the MW worship service | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. I attend the MW Sunday School regularly. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. I learn a lot in my Sunday School class. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. I attend the MW Friday night program regularly. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. I feel comfortable inviting others to Friday night program. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. I will continue to be in MW in the foreseeable future. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. I benefit a lot from MW. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. I have opportunities to serve in MW. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. I am committed to serve in MW. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. I am eager to serve in MW. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. I feel overwhelmed by serving in MW. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. I feel burnout from serving in MW. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 15. I feel being a part of MW. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. I feel accepted in MW. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. I feel understood in MW. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. I feel respected in MW. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19. I feel cared for in MW. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. Any other comments about your involvement and feelings about MW: _____ | | | | | | |

I. Your parents' feeling about the Metrowest church (feel free to ask them about it):

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. My father likes the MW Sunday worship service. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. My father likes the MW Sunday School program. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. My father likes the MW Friday program. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Any other comments your father has about MW: _____
5. My mother likes the MW Sunday worship service ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
6. My mother likes the MW Sunday School program. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
7. My mother likes the MW Friday program. ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
8. Any other comments your mother has about MW: _____

J. If your spouse also participates in this survey, decide on which one of you will complete this section on your children's feeling about the Metrowest church (feel free to ask them about it).

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | N/A |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. My first child likes the MW Sunday worship service. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. My first child likes the MW Sunday School program. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. My first child likes the MW Friday program. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| a. My first child is: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female | | | | | | |
| b. His/her age group: <input type="checkbox"/> 0-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 <input type="checkbox"/> K-Gr.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Gr.2-4
<input type="checkbox"/> Gr.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Gr.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Gr.7-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Gr.9 or above | | | | | | |
| 4. Any other comments your first child has about MW: _____ | | | | | | |
| 5. My second child likes the MW Sunday worship service. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. My second child likes the MW Sunday School program. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. My second child likes the MW Friday program. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| a. My second child is: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female | | | | | | |
| b. His/her age group: <input type="checkbox"/> 0-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 <input type="checkbox"/> K-Gr.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Gr.2-4
<input type="checkbox"/> Gr.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Gr.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Gr.7-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Gr.9 or above | | | | | | |
| 8. Any other comments your second child has about MW: _____ | | | | | | |
| 9. My third child likes the MW Sunday worship service. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. My third child likes the MW Sunday School program. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. My third child likes the MW Friday program. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| a. My third child is: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female | | | | | | |
| b. His/her age group: <input type="checkbox"/> 0-2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 <input type="checkbox"/> K-Gr.1 <input type="checkbox"/> Gr.2-4
<input type="checkbox"/> Gr.5 <input type="checkbox"/> Gr.6 <input type="checkbox"/> Gr.7-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Gr.9 or above | | | | | | |
| 12. Any other comments your third child has about MW: _____ | | | | | | |

K. Any other comments about the Metrowest church: _____

Thank you very, very much for your participation! Please save the file and email it as an attachment to me at kacpchoi@gmail.com or to Weiran at xu_weiran@yahoo.com. Xie-xie!

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VITA

King Fai Choi was born on October 21, 1954, in Hong Kong. He accepted Christ during high school. He came to the United States in 1974 to study Electrical Engineering at the University of Rochester and Computer Science at the Rochester Institute of Technology, both in New York. He took courses at the China Graduate School of Theology when he returned to Hong Kong and lived there for three years, and completed his Master of Divinity degree at the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, after he moved to the Boston area in 1998. He started his Doctor of Ministry program in 2005 and is expected to graduate in May 2008.

Professionally, he worked as an engineer for the Computer Consoles, Inc. in Rochester, New York for two periods and a total of four years. In between those two periods, he returned to Hong Kong and taught at the Department of Computing Studies of the Hong Kong Polytechnics. He last worked as a research scientist at the Eastman Kodak Company for 19 years before he entered full-time ministry in 2004. He is now serving as a pastor at the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston in Lexington, Massachusetts.

He has been married to his wife Anna for almost 30 years. They have two daughters. Charina, the older daughter, is a graduate student at U. C. Berkeley studying physical chemistry. Priscilla, the younger daughter, is an undergraduate student at Wheaton College in Illinois majoring in international relations.